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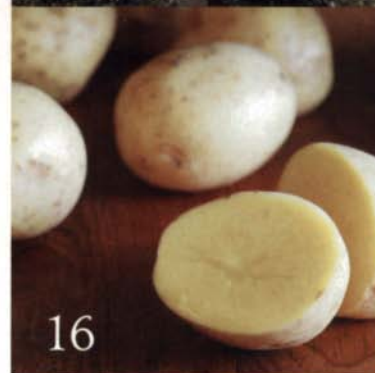
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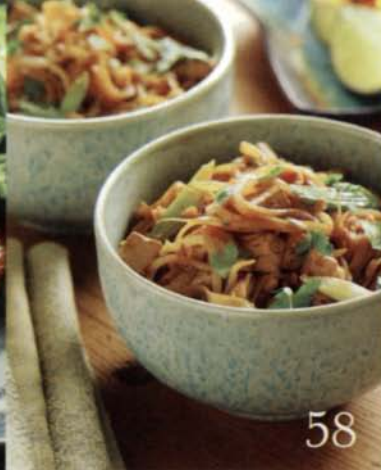
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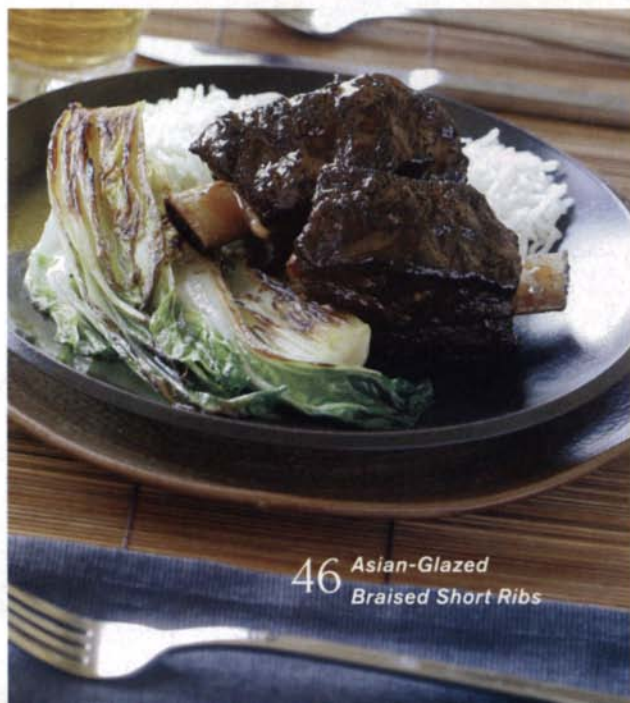
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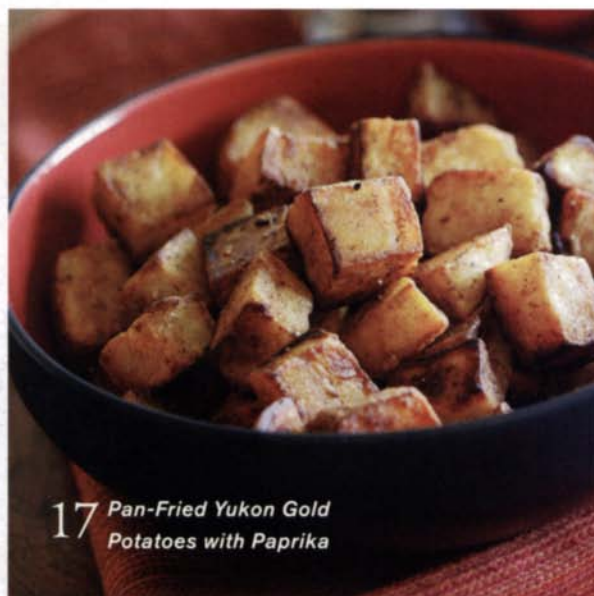
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Gather 'round the Table

Winter. It's the perfect time to cozy up at home and do two of our favorite things: cook and eat. And the only thing better than sitting down to a nice meal after a day in the kitchen is sharing that meal with friends. Nothing warms up a cold day like an invitation to dinner. To get you started, here are five ideas for comforting winter suppers, from super-casual to almost-fancy. Before you start cooking, be sure to check the yield of every recipe; you might have to double or triple a recipe if you're cooking for a crowd.

Comforting Roast Chicken Dinner

Prepare the gratin while the chicken roasts so you can pop it into the oven the moment the chicken is done. A slightly sweet Riesling with good acidity would be the ideal wine to serve with this meal.

Herb-Roasted Chicken with Lemons, p. 55

Pan-Fried Yukon Gold Potatoes with Paprika, p. 17

Creamy Winter Greens Gratin, p. 41

Maple Apple Pancake, p. 10

Quick & Easy Asian Dinner

You can pull this meal together in less than an hour. The soup uses few ingredients and comes together in a jiffy. Before you start the soup and the cod, start cooking some white rice to serve with the fish.

Lemony Chicken Noodle Soup with Ginger, Chile & Cilantro, p. 56

Sichuan Braised Cod, p. 82c

Ginger ice cream & fortune cookies

Make-Ahead Sunday Supper

Make the Short Rib Ragù and the Tiramisù a day ahead. On Sunday evening, you'll only need to make the polenta or mashed potatoes and the Frizzled Leek garnish, reheat the ragù, and top the dessert with cocoa or chocolate shavings. Try serving a peppery Grenache with the ragù.

Green salad with balsamic vinaigrette

Short Rib Ragù (p. 45) with **Frizzled Leek garnish** (p. 69) over polenta or mashed potatoes

Tiramisù, p. 64

Italian Inspiration

The scaloppine (without the pan sauce) can be kept warm in the oven while you serve the pasta as a first course; make the pan sauce at the last minute. Try a crisp Sauvignon Blanc with the pasta course and a high-acid Barbera D'Asti with the pork.

Angel Hair Pasta with Lemon Cream Sauce, p. 54

Braised Italian Chicken with Green Beans, Tomatoes & Olives, p. 82c

Biscotti & coffee

A Menu with Zingy Flavors

The Preserved Lemons (p. 57) take several weeks to pickle, so start them today and enjoy this flavorful menu sometime next month. Or, depending on where you live, you might be able to buy preserved lemons at a Middle Eastern market or a gourmet shop.

Tomato, Feta & Preserved Lemon Salad, p. 57

Roasted Salmon & Asparagus with Lemon Oil, p. 82c

Mango or passion fruit sorbet

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Our Favorite Season

You might say summer is the finest season for cooks, what with all those juicy tomatoes and ripe peaches hanging around. But I'd argue that deep winter is a cook's dream. The weather gives us a perfect excuse to spend whole afternoons fiddling in the kitchen, simmering and roasting and baking. I think that's why the February/March issue of *Fine Cooking* is always our staff's favorite. And this year is no exception:

"One of my favorite things in this issue is **Joanne Chang's trick for getting big, bakery-style square-shaped muffin tops** (p. 48). The 'trick' is to just fill the cups a lot more than you think you should so the tops overflow and grow together during baking. I love how such a seemingly minor detail gives such a big result." —Sarah Jay, executive editor

"I love how **Lori Longbotham perks up the rich, deep flavors of her roasted chicken and potatoes** recipes (p. 34) by sprinkling on fresh, brightly flavored garnishes right before serving. It's a brilliant trick for anything roasted." —Kim Masibay, associate editor

"My favorite recipe in this issue is **Molly Stevens' Red Wine Marinated Braised Short Ribs** (p. 43). I made them for my friends, and they were so impressed—short ribs are something they usually only order at restaurants, so the fact that I made them at home made me look really good!" —Rebecca Freedman, associate editor

"**Jennifer McLagan reminded me of another approach to cooking pork tenderloin** (one of my favorite cuts of meat)—pounding it into scaloppine. Her pork scaloppine recipe (p. 53), which is a riff on the classic Veal Saltimbocca, is my favorite in this issue because it's fast and super flavorful." —Jennifer Armentrout, test kitchen manager

"My favorite recipes from this issue are **the rice noodle stir-fries, which are so delicious, exotic, and different** from your everynight dinner, yet they use readily available ingredients. The Stir-Fried Noodles with Shrimp, Chiles & Lime (p. 59) are as good as the Pad Thai that we get from our favorite Asian restaurant."

—Kim Landi, editorial assistant

"Thanks to a nifty tip from a reader (p. 25), **I now have a good use for a French coffee press** I've had lying around the kitchen for years. By using it to soak dried mushrooms, I can now finally put it to good use." —Laura Giannatempo, assistant editor

And what's my favorite thing in this issue? Why my Creamy Winter Greens Gratin on p. 41, of course! Seriously, **I could live off the Asian-Glazed Braised Short Ribs** (p. 46) and I'm ready to impress my friends with Tony Rosenfeld's fancy (but not fussy) fried garnishes on p. 69.

—Susie Middleton, editor

P.S. For a quick dessert or breakfast made with refrigerator staples, try the apple pancake recipe at right.



Maple Apple Pancake

Serves three to four.

This easy custardy dessert (or breakfast) is a twist on a traditional French dish called a *clafoutis*, which is often made with cherries.

- 2 large eggs** (at room temperature if possible)
- 1¼ ounces (¼ cup) all-purpose flour**
- ¼ cup heavy cream**
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup**
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt**
- 1½ tablespoons (¾ ounce) unsalted butter**
- ½ large firm eating apple** (I like Gala), cored and thinly sliced
- Cinnamon sugar or confectioners' sugar and cinnamon for dusting**

Heat the oven to 425°F. Combine the eggs, flour, cream, maple syrup, and salt in a blender. Blend on high to combine well. Melt the butter in an 8-inch (measured across the top of the pan) heavy-duty ovenproof nonstick skillet (such as an omelet pan) over medium heat. Add the apple slices and sauté until soft and slightly browned, 5 to 7 minutes. Whiz the batter in the blender again until frothy, about 30 seconds. Pour the batter into the skillet (coax a few apples back to the center of the pan with a heatproof spatula), let the skillet sit for just a few seconds, and transfer it to the oven. Bake until the pancake is puffed, golden, and set, 12 to 15 minutes. Remove the skillet and let the pancake cool for a few minutes in the pan (it will deflate). Slide a flexible spatula or two under it and transfer to a cutting board. Sprinkle generously with cinnamon sugar or confectioners' sugar and a little cinnamon, cut into wedges, and serve warm.



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from our readers

Egg-free holidays

I just picked up the *Fine Cooking Holidays* magazine (*Fine Cooking* #75). Thank you, thank you to Alice Medrich for the three cookie dough recipes that DO NOT call for eggs! And to Ris Lacoste for the Apple Charlottes, also without eggs. My daughter, Olivia, is extremely allergic to eggs, and during the holidays it's always difficult to find Christmas cookies and desserts that are egg free. I was pleasantly surprised to open your magazine and find so many egg-free recipes to choose from. Olivia and I will be making all these recipes for our holiday celebrations this year. Thanks so much.

—Jan Schleiger,
Lafayette Hill, Pennsylvania

Fooling around with fish sauce

My husband and I have been enjoying your magazine for three years. With every issue we enjoy trying new recipes and learning about the ingredients we use—proper handling, proper storing, and their interactions with other foods. Over the past year we have tried a few recipes that call for Thai ingredients. We love our creations; however, unless I have a recipe to follow I am at a loss for how else to use ingredients such as rice wine vinegar, coconut milk, curry pastes, chili sauce, fish sauce, and even soy sauce (as an ingredient, not a condiment). I was hoping you could include an article on this type of cuisine, the ingredients that are essential to it, and how to use them. Thanks for a wonderful magazine.

—Amy and Jeff Laczek,
Kaneohe, Hawaii

Editors' reply: A great way to get familiar with some of the ingredients you mention is to make one of the noodle stir-fries on p. 58 of this issue. If you've got back issues, be sure to make the delicious Chicken Coconut Soup in *Fine Cooking* #67 and check out the profile of curry pastes in *Fine Cooking* #72.

How could we? An "unlikely" insult to our friends in Canada

I really do enjoy *Fine Cooking*. It's beautiful to look at and easy to read. The recipes are well presented and always turn out well. I believe what I read in *Fine Cooking*, and I've always been impressed by the range, accuracy, and sensibility of information given in even a short paragraph.

I was, therefore, a little surprised (and a bit disappointed) to read that you believe Canada to be an "unlikely place" to find great ice wine (*Fine Cooking* #75, "Ten Great Gifts in a Bottle"). The British Columbia and Ontario wine regions' climate and wine-making skill actually make us an extremely likely place to find the perfectly balanced, not cloyingly sweet, indescribable-until-you've-tasted-it ice wine. I wonder if you could explain the phrasing on that one? Thanks.

—Cathy Duerksen,
Vancouver, British Columbia

Editors' reply: To Cathy and all of our loyal Canadian readers (many of whom wrote to chastise us on this one!): Our sincere apologies. We are big fans of Canadian wines, and our phrasing was intended to be more of a comment on how underappreciated and unknown Canadian wines are to our U.S. readers. As our contributing editor, master sommelier Tim Gaiser notes, "Most Americans are completely unaware of Canadian wines, especially the excellent Canadian ice wines. This is simply because of the Byzantine alcoholic beverage laws of both countries that create very high tariffs and taxes levied on wines and spirits crossing the U.S.-Canada border. Hopefully, this will improve at some point in the near future and we'll see much more of the top Canadian wines here in the U.S."

So let's rephrase. While many Americans might not be aware of Canadian ice wines, they should seek them out, and the Inniskillin Oak-Aged Vidal Ice Wine is truly Canadian nectar.

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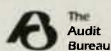
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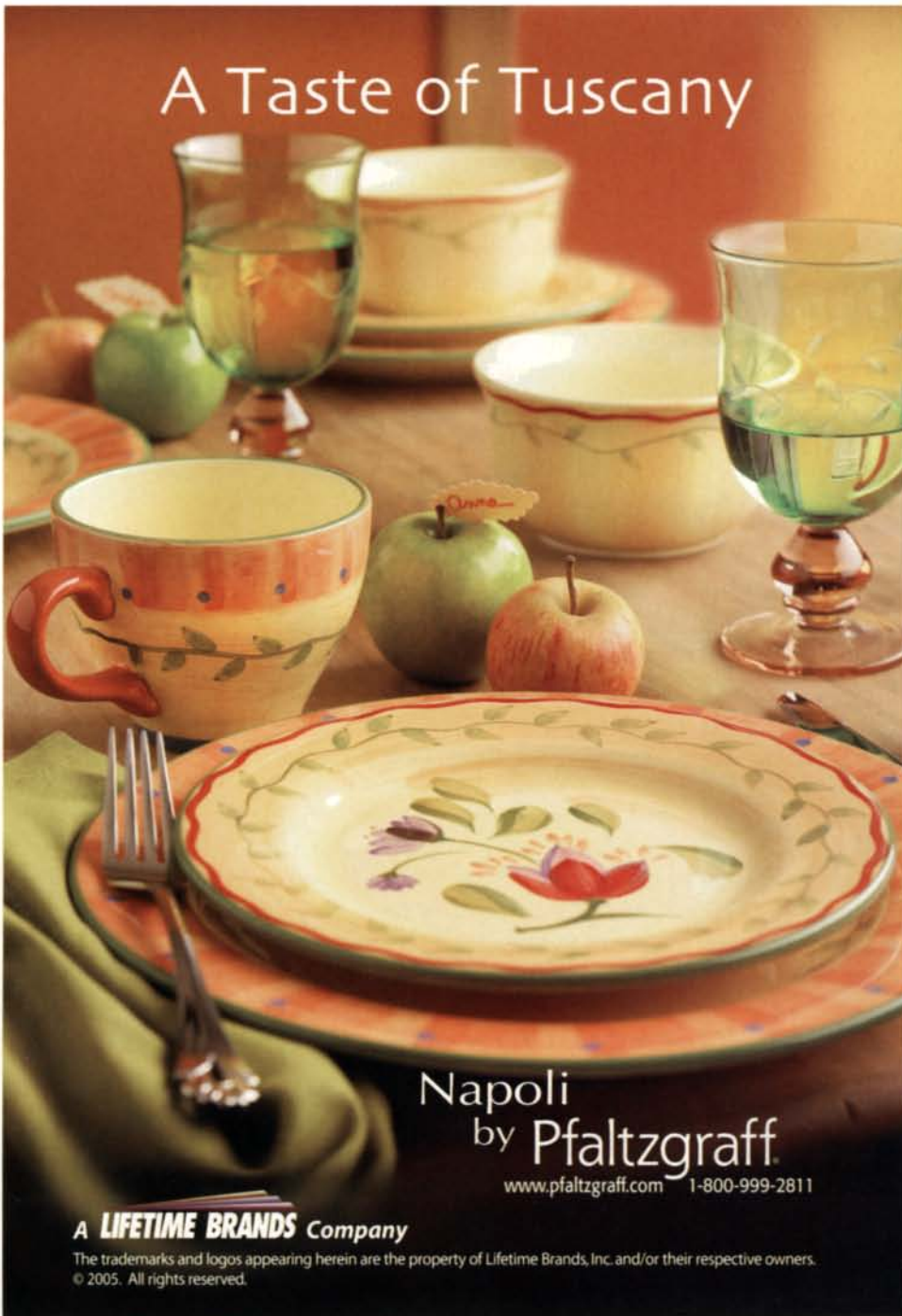


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At this time of year, cookbook author **Lori Longbotham** hungers for warm, complexly flavored dishes that are also easy to prepare. And the ingenious recipes in her article "Chicken & Potatoes Roasted Side-by-Side," on p. 34, fit the bill, delivering big flavors and lots of crisp, roasty textures without asking a whole lot of the cook. Lori has written several cookbooks, including *Summer/Winter Chicken* and most recently *Luscious Berry Desserts*.

If it's green, **Susie Middleton** ("A Winter Gratin Everyone Will Love," p. 39) will cook it. It wasn't always this way, but after a stint working with great produce and a 600°F oven at Al Forno restaurant in Providence, Rhode Island, she fell in love with vegetables. A dozen *Fine Cooking* vegetable features later, Susie still hasn't run out of ideas for how to cook them deliciously. Susie has been the editor of *Fine Cooking* since Issue 60 (Oct/Nov 2003).



Lori Longbotham

A contributing editor to *Fine Cooking*, **Molly Stevens** ("Three Ways to Braise Short Ribs for the Best Flavor," p. 42) is our go-to expert on braising, and with good reason—she nabbed both a James Beard award and an IACP cookbook award for her latest book, *All About Braising: The Art of Uncomplicated Cooking*. She's also the co-editor of the *Best American Recipes* series, the author of Williams-Sonoma's *New England*, and the co-author of *One Potato, Two Potato*.



Joanne Chang

Joanne Chang ("Muffins," p. 48) headed the pastry kitchens at several highly regarded Boston restaurants before going to New York City to study under François Payard at his patisserie. After a



Su-Mei Yu

year at Payard, Joanne returned to Boston to open her own shop. For the past five years, she's been the chef-owner of Flour Bakery & Café, where she bakes breads, cakes, tarts, cookies—and of course, fabulous muffins. She's also planning to open an Asian restaurant this fall.

Jennifer McLagan's love of lemons began in the backyard of her childhood home in Australia and continues to this day. Not one to relegate lemons to the sweet kitchen, Jennifer gives lemons a starring role in her savory cooking. She shares some of her favorite recipes and techniques in her story "Lemons as the Star," on p. 52. A food stylist and food writer, Jennifer recently published her first cookbook, *Bones*, a collection of recipes for cooking meat on the bone.

Su-Mei Yu ("Rice Noodle Stir-Fries," p. 58) is the chef-owner of Saffron restaurant in San Diego. She's the author of *Cracking the Coconut: Classic Thai Home Cooking* and *Asian Grilling*. Born of Chinese parents in Thailand, Su-Mei returns to her homeland annually to collect traditional Thai recipes.

Born and raised in Italy, **Laura Giannatempo** grew up eating her mother's delicious tiramisù. In "Tiramisù, the Ultimate Pick-Me-Up," on p. 62, she shares the recipe. Laura, an assistant editor for *Fine Cooking*, is a graduate of the Culinary Arts Program at New York's Institute of Culinary Education (ICE). She honed her culinary skills as a catering cook for The Cleaver Co. and as a line cook at The Green Table Café in New York. She also was an assistant editor at *The Magazine of La Cucina Italiana*.



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in season

Rich and Versatile, Yukon Golds Have It All

BY RUTH LIVELY

I remember the buzz when Yukon Gold potatoes first came on the market many years ago: a yellow-fleshed potato touted as being so tasty and rich that it hardly needed any butter. Today, purple, blue, and even pink potatoes are the new kids on the block, and Yukon Golds aren't the novelty they once were. But they remain a gold mine in my kitchen.

Developed in Canada, Yukon Golds are a cross between a North American white potato and a wild South American yellow-fleshed one. Their golden flesh is richly flavored and fairly firm and moist, with medium starch content. A perfect compromise between dry, fluffy russet potatoes and moist, waxy varieties, Yukon Golds are incredibly versatile. They're superb for mashing and in soups and chowders, and they're great for roasting, skillet frying (see recipe on the facing page), boiling, and even for making french fries and potato chips. There's almost nothing you can't do with

a Yukon Gold. They're truly an all-purpose potato.

As with other starchy foods like rice, grains, and beans, Yukon Gold potatoes provide a wonderful canvas for other flavors. Cream and cheese add richness, and sharp cheeses give a nice bite. Fresh herbs make wonderful aromatic partners, particularly the stout woody ones such as rosemary, sage, winter savory, thyme, and oregano. But more delicate herbs like parsley, cilantro, and chives also pair very well. Assertive spices like paprika, coriander, pepper, and nutmeg are also very compatible. If you have pink peppercorns on hand, Yukon Golds provide an excellent backdrop for their fragrant, sprightly flavor. I don't usually single out salt as a seasoning, but it plays an important role in bringing out the flavor of potatoes (and other starchy foods). And with potatoes, you always need more of it than you think. Aromatics like onions, garlic, leeks, celery, and peppers also meld beautifully with Yukon Golds.

tip:

If stored properly in a cool, dark place, preferably with high humidity, Yukon Golds don't turn brown as quickly as other potatoes once they're cut. Still, if you're prepping the potatoes ahead, it's a good idea to keep them covered in water or coat them lightly with oil.

Simple ways to enjoy Yukon Golds

herb-roasted

For herb-roasted potatoes, roast whole small Yukon Golds, tossed with olive oil and seasoned with coarse sea salt and pepper, in a hot oven until tender. During the last 20 minutes of cooking, add a handful of chopped sage, rosemary, winter savory, or several sprigs of thyme or a combination. Toss together and finish cooking.

braised with artichokes

To turn out a flavorful Mediterranean braise, brown quartered trimmed artichokes and quartered Yukon Golds in olive oil, then add olives, a few thin slices of lemon, slivered garlic, fresh or dried oregano, salt and pepper, and some chicken or vegetable stock. Cover and simmer until the vegetables are tender and the liquid has reduced to a few tablespoons, 30 to 35 minutes.

garlicky mashed

For garlic mashed potatoes, cover 1 1/2 pounds of quartered Yukon Golds and a head of peeled garlic in water, boil until tender, and drain. Immediately mash with a hand masher to your desired smoothness. Add salt, pepper, half a stick of butter, and if desired, a little half-and-half or cream.

boiled and smashed

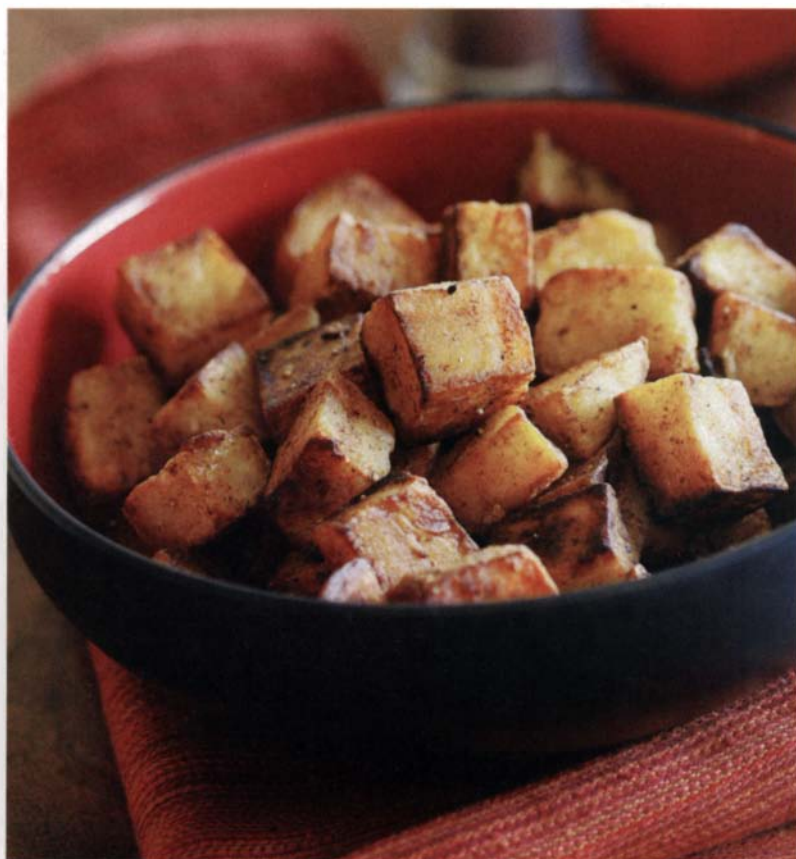
After boiling Yukon Golds in their jackets, smash them roughly with a fork right on the dinner plate, then drizzle with good extra-virgin olive oil and sprinkle on sea salt, a grind of black pepper, and a scattering of chopped chives.

in a gratin

For a simple but rich gratin, layer very thin slices of Yukon Golds in a generously buttered dish or skillet, arranging them so the slices just overlap. Sprinkle each layer lightly with salt and pepper, a little crushed pink peppercorn, rosemary leaves, and a little grated hard cheese, like Asiago or Parmigiano Reggiano. Make three to four layers in all. Pour a little heavy cream over all and bake at 375°F for 35 to 40 minutes, until golden.

as a soup

For a delicious and simple soup, sweat chopped leeks and celery in a little olive oil or butter, then simmer the leeks and celery with diced potatoes in chicken or vegetable stock or water. Season with salt and pepper. When the vegetables are tender, purée and serve hot or cold, with a dollop of sour cream topped with chopped chives.



Pan-Fried Yukon Gold Potatoes with Paprika

Serves four to six.

If you have smoked Spanish paprika (called pimentón), this is a great place to use it. Duck or goose fat is a delicious replacement for the olive oil. Use a pan large enough to hold the potatoes in one layer so they don't steam in their own moisture.

1 1/2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes (3 or 4 medium potatoes), scrubbed but not peeled
5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

3/4 teaspoon kosher salt; more to taste

1 teaspoon paprika, preferably Hungarian sweet or Spanish smoked paprika

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Cut the potatoes in half, then cut them in thick slices lengthwise, 1/2 to 3/4 inch wide. Stack the slices and cut them in half lengthwise,

then cut crosswise to get 3/4-inch-wide pieces.

Heat 4 tablespoons of the oil in a large (11- to 12-inch) skillet, preferably cast iron, over medium-high heat. When the oil is shimmering hot, add the potatoes and stir immediately to coat them with the oil. Sprinkle with the 3/4 teaspoon salt and stir again. Fry the potatoes, stirring frequently, until they're tender in the center and nicely browned on the outside, 25 to 30 minutes. (If the potatoes seem to be browning too fast, reduce the heat to medium or medium-low.)

Turn off the heat. Push the potatoes to one side of the pan and pour the remaining tablespoon of oil into the empty space in the pan. Stir the paprika into the oil and let sizzle for about 5 seconds. Stir the potatoes into the paprika oil until well coated. Stir in several grinds of pepper. Taste for salt and add more if necessary. Serve hot.

Ruth Lively cooks, writes, and gardens in New Haven, Connecticut. ♦

Countertop Solutions

Design twists transform these countertop items into neater, more organized space-savers.

BY REBECCA FREEDMAN



A sleek, easy-to-clean crock

Take charge of your clunky, disorganized collection of kitchen tools by replacing your old crock with this well-designed utensil holder. Its oval shape allows it to sit closer to the wall, making more room on the counter. The crock has three partitions that help keep our spatulas and wooden spoons in order, and the bottom of the crock comes off for easy cleaning. *OXO stainless-steel utensil holder*, \$19.99 at OXO.com (800-545-4411).



A box worth its salt

We like to keep our kosher and sea salt in containers on the counter, so it's easy to season whatever we're cooking. It's annoying, though, when salt spills out or unwanted food particles fall in, so we're partial to this nifty salt keeper; it's got a swivel top that's easy to open, protecting the salt but making it easy to access. *Salt keeper*, \$14.95 at Crateandbarrel.com (800-967-6696).



A scale for the wall

Although scales are indispensable kitchen tools, they can occupy more space on the counter than you're willing to give, especially if you've got a small kitchen. That's why we like this sleek, wall-mounted scale from Soehnle; it frees up counterspace, folding out when you need it and folding back up when you don't. *Soehnle Bernina scale*, \$49.95 at Cooking.com (800-663-8810).



A place to store bread & slice it, too

We like these boxes for their handy built-in cutting boards—Polder's stainless-steel box boasts a board that slides out from underneath the storage compartment, while Nigella Lawson's roomy bread bin has a lid that doubles as a cutting board. *Polder bread box*, \$59.99 at Amazon.com; *Nigella Lawson bread bin*, \$89.98 at Cheftools.com (866-716-2433).



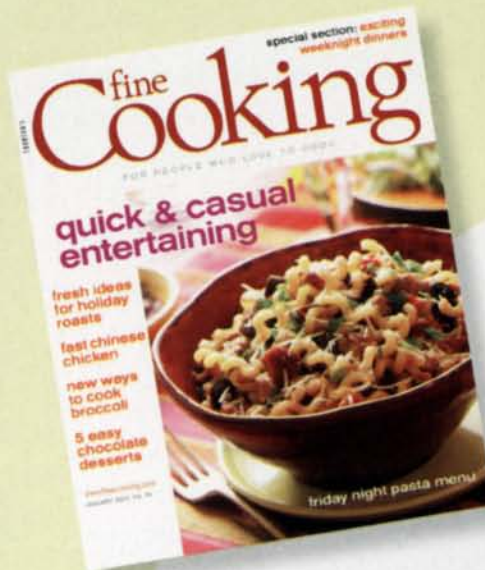
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my favorite Fine Cooking recipe

To find out which main and side dish recipes from 2005 received the highest number of votes, take a look inside the April/May issue of *Fine Cooking*. Or, after March 1, 2006, check out the results on our Web site, FineCooking.com.

From all the *Fine Cooking* readers who voted, 24 of you came away as winners of great prizes provided by these *Fine Cooking* advertisers.

In the meantime, thank you for casting your vote. We always enjoy learning more about what you like!



What's the best way to store cheese?

—Daniele Andrews, Phoenix, Arizona

A Tim Bucciarelli responds: First of all, buy only as much cheese as you really need so it doesn't hang around for too long. Then wrap it based on its moisture content and age. Younger, softer cheeses, such as Brie, Taleggio, or Chèvre, are more active and need a wrapping that lets them breathe. Waxed paper or parchment work well—their loose folds and crimps allow air to get in yet still offer protection from the drying environment of the refrigerator. Semifirm to firm cheeses, such as Morbier, Cheddar, or Gruyère, need to breathe less than young cheeses, while they need to be protected more from drying out. Keep these medium-aged cheeses in waxed paper or parchment with a loose over-wrap of plastic. Hard cheeses, such as Parmigiano Reggiano or extra-aged Gouda, are the most susceptible to drying, and I've found that tightly wrapping in foil works best for them. In general, I avoid wrapping cheeses directly in plastic because I find that it often gives cheese a bitter flavor and unpleasant texture. If you do use plastic, I suggest changing the wrapping often and cutting off a thin layer of the cheese that was in contact with the plastic.

Tim Bucciarelli is a manager at Formaggio Kitchen in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Have a question of general interest about cooking? Send it to Q&A, Fine Cooking, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506, or by email to fc@taunton.com, and we'll find a cooking professional with the answer.

How do I substitute single-acting baking powder (which is all I can find) for double-acting powder?

—Janice Linnan, Kuesnacht, Switzerland

A P.J. Hamel responds: Using the same amount of single-acting baking powder should work fine as long as you get your cookies, cake, or whatever you're making into the oven immediately after mixing. "Single-acting" means that the baking powder is activated by moisture only; "double-acting" means that it's activated by both moisture and oven heat. So, when you're making something

like a cake, the single-acting baking powder will start building air bubbles in the batter as soon as the liquid ingredients are mixed with the dry ingredients. The risk with this is that the baking powder won't have enough leavening power left if the batter isn't baked right away.

You might also try mixing the batter or dough without the baking powder, and only mix in the powder immediately before baking. This way the powder won't lose its zip by the time you get the pan into the oven. The key to this method is to evenly disperse the baking powder, which may be tricky with some stiffer doughs or batters.

P.J. Hamel is the editor of The Baker's Catalogue.

My gas stove often burns the bottom of my stews and braises. Would I get better results in the oven? What's the best temperature and will the cooking time change?

—Lisa Denvir, via email

A Molly Stevens responds: Yes, there is less chance of burning braises and stews in the oven because the lidded pot is surrounded by even, indirect heat. In addition, meat, poultry, or vegetables need turning less frequently and the pot can be left unattended for longer. Whether you braise on the stovetop or in the oven, you should use a heavy-duty pan with a thick bottom, which will reduce the risk of burning.

To braise and stew in the oven, place the pot on a lower rack so that the hot air can circulate freely. The ideal temperature is between 275° and 325°F. Since ovens differ, I suggest peeking under the lid during the first 30 minutes to make sure that the liquid isn't simmering too vigorously. If it is, lower the temperature by 10 to 15 degrees.

While it's impossible to offer exact conversion times for moving from stovetop to oven, cooking stews and braises in the oven takes longer—which has the added benefit of allowing them time to develop even more complex flavors (see "Three Ways to Braise Short Ribs for the Best Flavor" on p. 42). For example, a stovetop braise that normally takes 1 hour can take 1½ to 2 hours in the oven. Use the same doneness test as you would on the stove, such as checking that the meat is fork-tender.

Molly Stevens, a contributing editor to Fine Cooking, is the author of the award-winning book All About Braising.



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Problem Foods Meet Their Wine Matches

BY TIM GAISER

Most of the time, food and wine pairing isn't very complicated. It can be as easy as drinking what we like (or happen to have on hand) with whatever we're having to eat—an approach that often works out fine, but not always.

Some foods just aren't kind to wine, and a few can be downright nasty. But don't despair—there really is a wine match for every food. So don't think for a minute that you have to exclude wine from the meal when there's a problem food on the menu.

Here are seven notoriously ornery foods and guidelines to help you choose a good match for each of these troublemakers.

Hearty Greens

THE CHALLENGE:

The assertive earthy, mineral, bitter, spicy, and even cabbagey flavors of hearty greens such as broccoli rabe, kale, Swiss chard, and collard greens will make practically any wine taste metallic and awful.

THE SOLUTION:

The "spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down" theory definitely works here. Reach for a fruity, slightly sweet white wine

to offset the bitterness of the greens. Chenin Blanc and Riesling are two excellent choices.

GOOD BOTTLES:

2004 Dry Creek Vineyards Chenin Blanc, Clarksburg, California (\$12)

2004 Dr. Loosen Estate Riesling, Mosel, Germany (\$16)



Spicy-Hot Foods

THE CHALLENGE:

Dishes with lots of chile peppers, cayenne, or chile powder—such as fiery salsas, curries, and some stir-fries—pose a problem because hot spices accentuate alcohol and oak in both white and red wines, creating a bitter, harsh finish in the wine. And alcohol, in turn, can intensify chiles' burn.

THE SOLUTION:

Look for fruity, lower alcohol (less than 13%) white, blush, or red wines with little or no oak such as fruity Riesling, White Zinfandel, or some Pinot Noirs.

GOOD BOTTLES:

2004 Beringer White Zinfandel, California (\$8)

Sokol Blosser Evolution, 9th Edition, Oregon (a delicious fruity blend of nine white grapes) (\$15)

2004 Rosemount Estate Pinot Noir, South Eastern Australia (\$10)



Oily Fish

THE CHALLENGE:

Oily fish such as mackerel and salmon—both smoked and unsmoked—can dull a wine's fruit and make it lose its crispness.

THE SOLUTION:

Light-bodied, high-acid sparkling wines and white wines like Pinot Grigio and Sauvignon Blanc are

the perfect match for oily fish. The wine's acidity will cut right through the richness of the fish, and the fruity character of the wine will remain intact.

GOOD BOTTLES:

Mumm Napa Brut Prestige (\$18)

2004 Blason Pinot Grigio, Veneto, Italy (\$9)

2004 Honig Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley (\$14)



Tip: If you can describe the type of wine you want (e.g., a high-acid white with no oak), a salesperson at a wine shop can guide you toward a good bottle.



Artichokes and Asparagus

THE CHALLENGE:

The green, grassy flavors of artichokes and asparagus can clash horribly with wine. Adding insult to injury, artichokes contain trace amounts of a chemical called cynarin, which makes wine (and any other liquid, including water) taste sweet to

people who are sensitive to it, as many people are.

THE SOLUTION:

Bracingly acidic, bone-dry whites without any oak (think Sauvignon Blanc) are the ticket. They'll still taste dry, crisp, and bright when paired with asparagus, and their high acidity seems to keep them from tasting sweet when paired with artichokes.

GOOD BOTTLES:

2004 Chateau La Commanderie de Queyret, Entre-deux-Mers, Bordeaux (Sauvignon Blanc) (\$12)

2004 André Vatan Sancerre "Les Charmes" (Sauvignon Blanc) (\$18)

2004 Jean-Marc Brocard Chablis "Domaine Sainte Claire" (Chardonnay) (\$24)

Acidic Dishes

THE CHALLENGE:

Savory dishes that are made with lemons or vinegar—the Pork Scaloppine with Prosciutto, Sage & Caramelized Lemon on p. 53, for example, salads with acidic dressings, or meals with vinegary side dishes—make wine taste completely out of balance, dull, and flabby.

THE SOLUTION:

A wine's acidity is the key to a successful match in this case, so shop for a high-acid white (such as a racy, unoaked Sauvignon Blanc or a crisp Riesling) or a high-acid red wine (such

as Barbera D'Asti) that can stand up to the acidity in the dish.

GOOD BOTTLES:

2005 Villa Maria Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$12)

2004 Mönchhof Estate Riesling, Mosel, Germany (\$15)

2003 Michele Chiarlo Barbera d'Asti, Piedmont, Italy (\$17)



Dishes with Eggs

THE CHALLENGE:

Dishes with soft-yolked eggs, such as the classic bistro salad of frisée and poached egg, are some of the toughest foods to pair with wine. The palate-coating texture of a runny yolk combined with the sulfurous elements in the egg make most wines taste metallic, flat, and unbalanced.

THE SOLUTION:

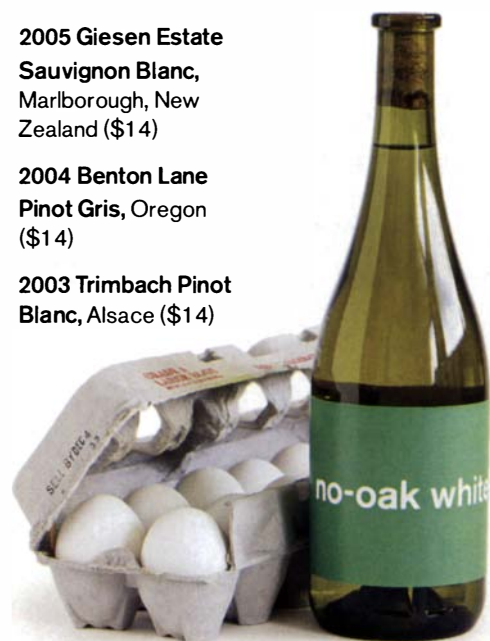
Shop for medium-bodied, crisp white wines without oak. Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Blanc, and Pinot Gris are great places to start.

GOOD BOTTLES:

2005 Giesen Estate Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$14)

2004 Benton Lane Pinot Gris, Oregon (\$14)

2003 Trimbach Pinot Blanc, Alsace (\$14)



A contributing editor to Fine Cooking, Tim Gaiser is a master sommelier. ♦



Winning tip

Cake decorating without mistakes

If I want to write a message such as "Happy Birthday" on a cake without making a mess, I first write the message on the cake itself with the sharp end of a toothpick. Then, I trace over the message with icing or melted chocolate using a decorating tip and a pastry bag. This helps with the spacing and uniformity of the letters, and it helps avoid potential mistakes.

—Tiffany Halberg, Anaheim, California

A prize for the best tip

We want your best tips—we'll pay for the ones we publish—and we'll give a prize to the cleverest tip in each issue. Write to Tips, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506 or email fc@taunton.com.

The prize for this issue's winner: A 20-piece Pistoulet dinnerware set from the Pfaltzgraff Collection; value, \$200.



Frozen broth cubes help soups cool quickly

Like many people, I freeze broth in ice-cube trays. When I make a large batch of hot soup, I add a few frozen broth cubes to cool the soup quickly before refrigerating it. Far from diluting the flavor, it enhances it. I use vegetable broth with a vegetable soup and chicken broth in richer soups.

—Brenda J. Roche, Travelers Rest, South Carolina

Use shower caps as plastic wrap

On hotel stays, I always bring home one of those complimentary plastic shower caps. They're perfect for covering bowls of food. They're easier than regular plastic wrap and they're reusable.

—D. Holzinger, Maple Grove, Minnesota

Cut brownies with a pizza cutter

When I was cutting a pan of brownies recently, the tops stuck to my knife, damaging the brownies and making a mess. As I was rinsing off the knife to remove stuck brownie tops, my 11-year-old son suggested we use a pizza cutter. The cutter glided smoothly through the rest of the brownies with no mess.

—Rachel S. Garron, West Hartford, Connecticut



A rasp grater doubles as lemon juice strainer

When I need both the zest and the juice of a lemon, I use my rasp-style grater. First, I use it to grate the zest. Then I flip it over, remove any residual zest, and squeeze the lemon juice over it. This strains out seeds and any undesired pulp.

—Katie Durno, via email

Line pans with butter wrappers

I save waxed paper butter wrappers and reuse them to line cake or brownie pans instead of parchment. I always place the printed side down, away from the food. This method is ecofriendly and is a good backup option when you're out of parchment.

—M.H., via email



French press keeps soaking mushrooms submerged

I have an alternative method for soaking dried mushrooms than the one illustrated in "The Bold Flavors of Dried Mushrooms" (*Fine Cooking* #76). I use my French press coffeemaker to submerge the mushrooms in hot water. The top of the press will keep them under the water until you're ready to use them. And the fine mesh acts as a strainer for the flavorful liquid, keeping grit behind.

—Judy Gordon, Bend, Oregon

Custom-cut parchment to fit cookie sheets

The rolls of parchment I buy are usually 15 inches wide, but my cookie sheets are only 12 inches. To avoid having to trim the excess to fit my sheets every time, I take a sharp serrated knife or a good pair of scissors and cut 3 inches off the end of the roll. I hold the excess together in a roll with a kitchen clip. This narrower roll is useful for lining the sides of a round cake pan or just for filling in where a narrow piece is needed. As for the remaining 12-inch roll, I'm left to make just one cut for each cookie sheet.

—Estelle Twohey,
Peterborough, Ontario

Spices stored in zip-top bags save space

I found a convenient solution for keeping all my spices in one single container that can be stored just about anywhere. I empty each spice jar into individual pint-size zip-top bags, write the name of the spice on each, squeeze out the air, then seal and roll them up (making sure the name shows clearly). This way, I can fit more than 20 spice bags in one gallon-size zip-top bag or in a container of equivalent volume. And I can actually measure out a tablespoon of spice. (I could never fit anything bigger than a teaspoon in regular spice jars.)

—Sharon Lin, Maui, Hawaii

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what's new



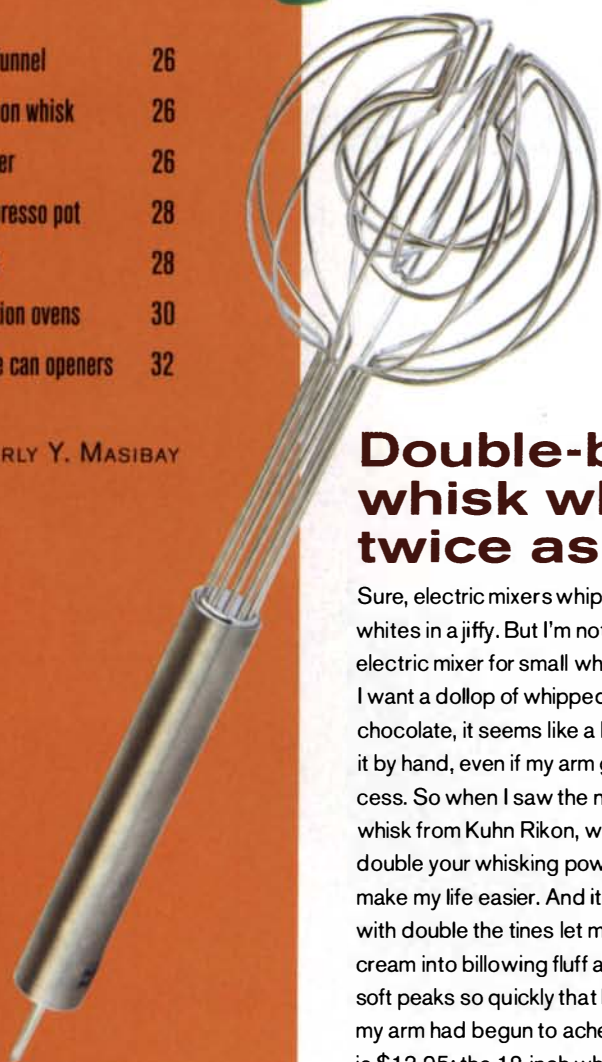
Instant classic: a funnel that folds flat for storage

Until recently, I hadn't given funnels much thought and I certainly had no complaints about them. But then I happened upon this collapsible funnel and, in an instant, every funnel that came before seemed hopelessly flawed. Colorful and cute as a button, this flexible rubber funnel folds flat to take up barely any space when not in use. It's dishwasher-safe and can withstand both boiling-hot and freezing-cold temperatures.

Available in red, green, yellow, and black, this Danish design sells for \$28 at Momastore.org (800-447-6662).

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BY KIMBERLY Y. MASIBAY

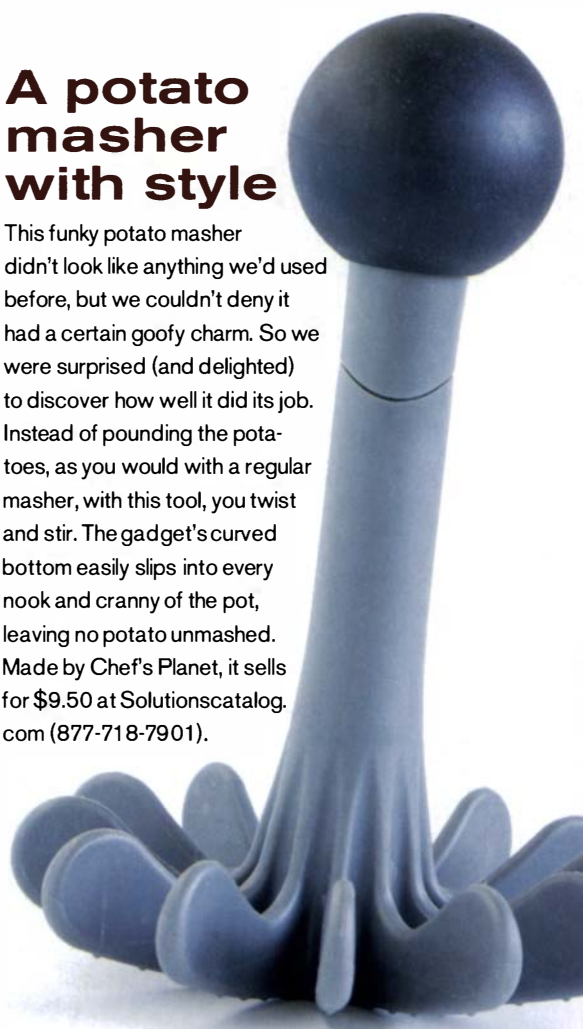


Double-balloon whisk whips twice as fast

Sure, electric mixers whip cream and egg whites in a jiffy. But I'm not one to lug out the electric mixer for small whipping tasks. When I want a dollop of whipped cream for my hot chocolate, it seems like a lot less trouble to do it by hand, even if my arm gets sore in the process. So when I saw the new double-balloon whisk from Kuhn Rikon, which is supposed to double your whisking power, I thought it might make my life easier. And it did. This groovy tool with double the tines let me transform heavy cream into billowing fluff and egg whites into soft peaks so quickly that I was done before my arm had begun to ache. The 10-inch whisk is \$13.95; the 12-inch whisk is \$15.95 at Cooking.com (800-663-8810).

A potato masher with style

This funky potato masher didn't look like anything we'd used before, but we couldn't deny it had a certain goofy charm. So we were surprised (and delighted) to discover how well it did its job. Instead of pounding the potatoes, as you would with a regular masher, with this tool, you twist and stir. The gadget's curved bottom easily slips into every nook and cranny of the pot, leaving no potato unmashed. Made by Chef's Planet, it sells for \$9.50 at Solutionscatalog.com (877-718-7901).





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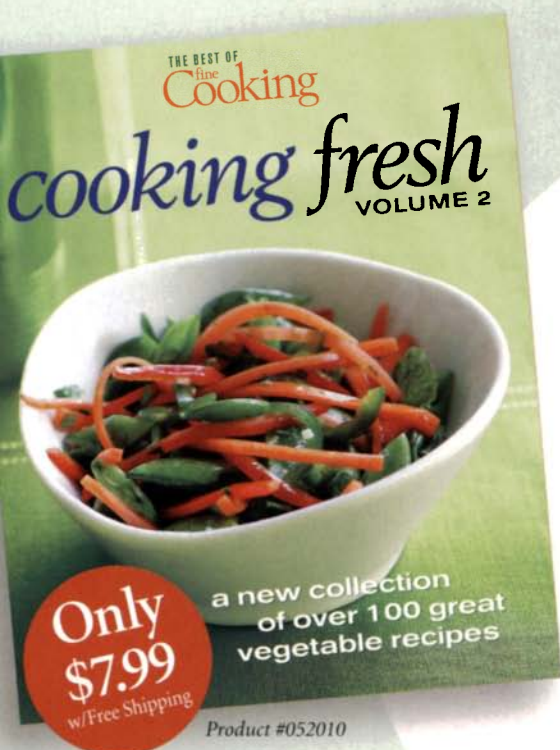
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how does it work?

The stovetop espresso pot: an Italian classic

If you're not ready to splurge on an espresso machine (or don't have the space for one) but still want to make a good cup of espresso at home, a stovetop espresso pot could be just the thing. Compact, inexpensive, and easy to use, these pots have three parts: a bottom chamber for water, a metal filter to hold coffee grounds, and a top

chamber for the brewed espresso. As water heats in the bottom chamber, pressure builds and forces the hot water up through the ground coffee and into the top chamber. The result is a rich, concentrated cup of coffee. (For sources, see *Where to Find It*, p. 76.)

—Laura Giannatempo, assistant editor



Tightly screw the top onto the bottom, and set the pot over a small burner. If you're using a gas stove, adjust the flame so it's no wider than the base of the pot. With an electric stove, use medium-high heat and position the pot so that the handle isn't exposed to heat. When the pot starts to gurgle, remove it from the heat (use an oven mitt), and let it sit until all the coffee flows up to the top chamber.



The espresso machine is made up of three parts: a bottom chamber for water, a metal filter for the coffee grounds, and a top chamber for the brewed espresso.



Fill the bottom with water just below the inside valve. (Using tepid water is fine, but experts say you'll get superior results with boiling or very hot water.)



Place the filter into the pot (no water should seep into the filter) and fill it to the rim with finely ground espresso roast coffee; don't tamp the coffee. Wipe any coffee grounds off the rim.

7 things to do with a mini torch

The best-known culinary use for this flame-throwing tool is creating the crunchy caramelized sugar topping on crème brûlée, but we use it for lots more. Mini torches come in petite versions with short nozzles, but we prefer the slightly larger versions, such as the Bon Jour shown at right, which hold more butane and have longer nozzles that give you more control over the intensity of the flame. (For sources, see *Where to Find It*, p. 76.)

1. Char the skin of bell peppers or chiles before peeling.

2. Melt shredded cheese on soups, toasts, or gratins.

3. Brown meringue.

4. Toast marshmallows.

5. Warm up dull chocolate ganache on a cake or tart so it looks shiny.

6. Heat a knife blade before slicing ice cream cake, cheesecake, or any sticky cake or pie.

7. Light candles or start a charcoal fire.



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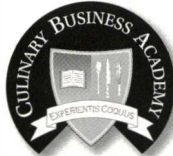
When Opportunity Knocks...



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5 reasons to love true convection ovens

If you're in the market for a new oven, consider getting one with true convection. Why? Because they're faster and more efficient, and they give tastier results than regular ovens. So what is true convection? Well, with a conventional radiant oven, you generally get two heating elements—a bake element in the oven's bottom and a broil element at the top. With a true convection oven, you get that, plus you also get a fan and an extra heating element around the fan. This system heats air to a uniform temperature before the fan blows it into the oven. We recently spent a day cooking with the latest true convection ovens from Gaggenau and Thermador and discovered that this hot circulating air has several benefits for the cook.

Tips for getting more out of convection

- ❖ Follow the rule of 25: When following a recipe written for a conventional oven, take down the temperature by about 25°F. And even with the temperature reduction, expect the food to be done about 25% faster than the recipe suggests.
- ❖ For the best air circulation, use low-sided baking pans.
- ❖ Watch for doneness. Start checking early and often until you get used to cooking the convection way.

For sources, see *Where to Find It*, p. 76.

1. Roast a whole chicken in 45 minutes.

Generally, true convection speeds up cooking by about 25%. The time savings is subtle with quick-cooking items like cookies—you'll shave just a minute or so off the baking time—but with a whole turkey, you could save yourself nearly an hour. We roasted a 3½-pound chicken in just 45 minutes (15 minutes at 425°F, followed by 30 minutes at 325°F) instead of the usual hour.

2. Get crispy skin and moist, juicy meat.

The circulating hot air that helps you cook faster also speeds up the chemical reactions that occur during cooking, giving you superior results. In our tests, the skin of the roasting chicken rendered its fat and browned quickly, so that by the end of cooking, the skin was deep golden brown with a crackly, crisp texture over the entire chicken, and both the white and dark meat stayed tender and juicy. The sugars in roasting potatoes caramelized quickly, creating crisp edges and deep flavors.

3. Bake multiple sheets of cookies in the oven at the same time.

True convection ovens don't seem to be plagued by the hot and cool spots so common in conventional ovens. Baking several sheets of cookies at once in a conventional oven is a recipe for disaster—some cookies will burn and others will be underbaked. And even a single sheet of cookies generally needs to be rotated once during baking. But when we baked three sheets of cookies simultaneously in a convection oven, the cookies baked evenly on all three racks, and we didn't have to rotate the pans. Very efficient.

4. Cook your entire meal—main course, side dish, dessert—at once with no flavor transfer.

It may sound far-fetched, but with true convection it's possible. We cooked a juicy roast beef and a pan of chewy, fudgy brownies together in the same oven with no flavor transfer. In a different oven, we roasted monkfish tails with curry spices on the top rack, cooked a pan of mustard & rosemary roasted potatoes on the bottom rack, and baked an apple crisp on the rack in between. Again, there was no flavor transfer—the apple crisp didn't taste like curried fish or vice versa. The hot circulating air cooked the items evenly, and special filters eliminated odors. Plus, all the dishes still cooked faster than they would have in a regular oven.

5. Have more options and flexibility in your cooking.

The ovens we tried let you turn the convection function on and off as you please—but that's just the beginning. You can use the convection element as the sole heat source. Or you can use the convection element with just the broiler or just the baking element. Or you can use all three elements at once for the most intense heat and fastest cooking.

shopping tip:

Some convection ovens have a fan but not the third heating element. This setup will not produce the consistent results of "true" or "pure" convection. When shopping, be sure to confirm that the oven has that third heating element around the fan.

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review:

Smooth-edge can openers are a cut above

BY MARYELLEN DRISCOLL

My old can opener is slow and stuttering, it stalls out on dents, and the cutting wheel is shamefully gunked up. Yet I've always turned a blind eye to its inadequacies. Well, no more. I've discovered a new breed of can openers that skirts all of the annoying pitfalls of regular manual openers.

These new can openers, known as “safety,” “safe-cut,” or “smooth-edge” openers, approach the mundane task of opening a can in a rather enlightening way. Instead of cutting into the lid, the opener's metal wheel pries under the lid's outer lip so that the entire top of the can lifts up and off. That might not sound like a big deal, but it leads to several significant advantages (see the sidebar on the facing page).

Of course, with new designs come new challenges. Smooth-edge openers attach quite differently from regular can openers. All of the models tested for this review came with instructions that were worth taking the time to read. Our top choices were, in part, selected for their greater ease of attachment (see “What to Look For” at right). After a few uses, attaching and detaching did become second nature. Also, if you're in the habit of pressing the lid into the can to drain off liquid, well, that's not possible, so you might keep your old standby for canned tuna.

The short learning curve to operating these new openers is worth the greater ease of use (and the Band-Aids that they'll save you over time). Heck, they almost make me wish more good things came in a can.



Top pick

1 Rösle Can Opener \$30 at Cookswares.com

The sleek design doesn't compromise the strength of this opener. It's among the easiest and most comfortable to turn, with divots in the turning handle for aided grip. Attaching to the can is pleasantly simple, and it stores most compactly.

What to look for

After testing 11 models, we don't recommend buying just any smooth-edge can opener.

Our favorites had knobs positioned parallel to the side of the can, like a traditional can opener. Turning the knob from the can's side significantly reduces strain to your wrist and elbow, and on most models, this design allows you to see if you're properly attaching the opener.

Some models come with pincers so that you can remove the lid without even touching it, but with the can's smooth edges, we didn't find the pincers necessary.

We tried these other smooth-edge openers too, listed alphabetically: Kuhn Rikon's Deluxe Safety LidLifter, Slim Safety LidLifter, and Safety LidLifter; Leifheit Safety Can Opener; Tupperware E-Series Can Opener; and Zyliss Safe Edge Can Opener.

Runners-up



2 Orbi SafeCut Can Opener by Good Cook

\$15.99 at Laprimashop.com

This opener has an ergonomic design that helps reduce strain. The grip is soft and the tension of turning the knob among the least forced (on par with Cuisipro). It's also easy to attach.



3 Oxo Good Grips Smooth Edge Can Opener

\$19.99 at Kitchenkapers.com

This model opened cans with the least amount of resistance. The large, soft-grip knob and thick, no-slip handles make it easy to grip. Although you can't see where the cutting wheel should align because of the design, the Oxo logo on the handle helps guide positioning.



4 Cuisipro Can Opener

\$24.99 at Cutleryandmore.com

This opener is easy to attach and nicely balanced. It takes more effort to turn than the Rosle and Oxo, but, compared with other safe-cut openers, this is one of the best.



Big advantages to smooth-edge openers

No sharp edges. The cutting mechanism smooths the edges of the lid and the can, so you can lift the lid off with no worries of cutting yourself (see far left). (Manufacturers warn that if you roll the opener too far past the starting point, you might compromise the smooth edge, but I did this more than once and found it mostly just roughens the edge, like a snag.)

The lid doesn't fall into the can. No more fishing out fallen lids.

No more gunky cutting wheels. The cutting mechanism never touches the can's contents, so there's no risk of cross contamination.

Plows through dents. These openers tend to do their job flawlessly, even when a can is dented.

Chicken & Potatoes Roasted Side-by-Side

BY LORI LONGBOTHAM

Walking through the streets of Istanbul one day, I smelled chickens roasting. Now that's a wonderful fragrance anywhere in the world, but at this particular place the chickens were on a spit in an outdoor oven and underneath them was a pile of potatoes still in their skins. As the potatoes cooked, they soaked up seasoned juices from the chickens above and became enriched with flavor. My immediate thought was, "I've got to try that when I get home."

When I started experimenting with the method, I thought I'd get the best results by roasting sliced potatoes underneath chicken quarters on the same baking sheet. But it didn't work out that way. The potatoes didn't get as crisp as I wanted. So I modified the concept, arriving at a simple side-by-side cooking technique that delivers amazing results.

I choose chicken thighs for their juicy flavor and roast them alongside



The author's all-in-one-pan roasting method lets the potatoes pick up extra flavor by mingling with the chicken juices.

Season boldly, roast it all
in one pan, and garnish with
fresh, bright flavors





Roasted Chicken Thighs, Yukon Gold Potatoes & Lemons with Cilantro Gremolata

Serves four.

Try serving this with sautéed green beans sprinkled with some of the gremolata.

3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger
1 tablespoon finely grated lemon zest
2 cloves garlic, minced
1½ teaspoons ground coriander
1½ teaspoons ground cumin
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh cilantro
8 chicken thighs (about 6 ounces

each), trimmed of excess fat and skin

2 medium Yukon gold potatoes (12 ounces), each cut into 8 wedges

1 lemon, ends trimmed and cut into quarters

Heat the oven to 425°F. Stir together the butter, 2 teaspoons of the ginger, 2 teaspoons of the lemon zest, half the garlic, the coriander, the cumin, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper in a small bowl. In another small bowl, stir together the cilantro, the remaining ginger, lemon zest, and garlic to make the gremolata garnish. Set aside.

Smear the butter mixture under the skin of the chicken thighs. Arrange the chicken skin side up on one end of a large rimmed baking sheet (for sources, see p. 76). Sprinkle lightly with salt. At the other end of the baking sheet, toss the potatoes and lemon wedges with ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper and spread into a single layer. Roast for 20 minutes. Baste the chicken with the pan juices using a brush, and flip the potatoes and lemon with a spatula (they may be a little stuck and need loosening). Continue to roast, basting the chicken

and flipping the potatoes every 10 minutes, until the chicken and potatoes look crisp and deeply golden, about 30 minutes more.

Stir the potatoes and lemon, transfer to a serving bowl with a slotted spoon, and gently stir in half of the cilantro gremolata. Baste the chicken and transfer with tongs to a serving platter, sprinkle with the remaining gremolata, and serve hot.

DRINK CHOICES Try a crisp unoaked Sauvignon Blanc like the 2005 Kim Crawford, Marlborough (\$17) or the 2004 Frog's Leap, Napa (\$16.50).

potato chunks or wedges on a baking sheet. Both are better for the combination, and it's efficient, too. As soon as you pull the pan out of the oven, supper is two-thirds done. All you need to round out the meal is a green salad or vegetable sauté.

A two-step flavoring process

Before cooking, I season the chicken and potatoes boldly. I might let the chicken bathe in a zesty marinade for a few hours. Or, I'll toss the chicken and potatoes with a mixture of dry seasonings such as salt, spices, and citrus zest. Or, I'll make some flavored butter and smear it under the chicken skin. The well-seasoned chicken releases delicious juices that mingle with the potatoes on the baking sheet.

After cooking, as a finishing touch, I top the potatoes and chicken with a sprinkling of fresh, bright flavor such as citrus, ginger, or herbs, right before serving.

Once you become familiar with this seasoning technique, feel free to start improvising your own flavor combinations.



Roasted Chicken Thighs, Baby Potatoes & Tomatoes with Olives & Mint

Serves four.

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 6 bay leaves**
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves**
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed**
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more as needed**
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**
- 8 chicken thighs (about 6 ounces each), trimmed of excess fat and skin**
- 12 baby white or yellow potatoes (1 pound), halved**
- 1 pint grape tomatoes, halved**
- 4 slender scallions, white and green parts cut diagonally into 1½-inch lengths**
- ¼ cup olives, preferably Niçoise or Picholine, pitted and chopped**
- ¼ cup slivered fresh mint leaves**
- 2 teaspoons capers, drained, rinsed, and roughly chopped**


Stir together 2 tablespoons of the oil, the bay leaves, thyme, garlic, ½ teaspoon of the salt, and ⅛ teaspoon of the pepper in a large bowl. Add the chicken and toss to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and marinate in the refrigerator, turning occasionally, for at least 1 hour and up to 8 hours.

Heat the oven to 425°F. Arrange the chicken skin side up at one end of a large rimmed baking sheet. (Discard the bay leaves, garlic, and any marinade.) Sprinkle lightly with salt. At the other end of the baking sheet, toss the potatoes with the remaining 1 tablespoon oil, ½ teaspoon salt, and ⅛ teaspoon pepper, and spread in a single layer. Roast for 20 minutes. Baste the chicken with the pan juices using a brush, turn the potatoes, and roast for another 10 minutes. Baste the chicken and turn the potatoes again and roast for 5 minutes.

Stir the tomatoes and scallions into the potatoes and roast, basting and turning once or twice, until the chicken and potatoes are golden and crisp looking, and the tomatoes and scallions are soft, about 15 minutes more.

Stir the vegetables, transfer with a slotted spoon to a serving bowl, and stir in the olives, 2 tablespoons of the mint, and the capers. Season to taste with more salt. Baste the chicken and transfer with tongs to a serving platter, sprinkle with the remaining 2 tablespoons mint, and serve hot.

DRINK CHOICES A dry, medium-bodied white with vibrant fruit and no oak would pair well with the herbal qualities of this recipe. Try the 2004 La Cadalaria Pinot Grigio, Veneto (\$16) or the 2004 Bodegas Aldial Naia Rueda, Spain (\$12).



Getting it browned, keeping it moist

Truly great roasted chicken and potatoes should be beautifully browned and crisp outside yet moist and tender inside. Here's how to make that happen:

USE DARK MEAT. It's richer than white meat, so it stays moist and juicy even if you cook it a little longer than might be ideal.

DON'T CROWD THE PAN. An 11x17-inch heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet (for sources, see p. 76) is the perfect size for these recipes. If you don't have a large one, use two smaller baking sheets.

BASTE THE CHICKEN AND STIR THE POTATOES OFTEN. For the best browning and crisping, bake them on opposite sides of the baking sheet, and baste and stir from time to time to incorporate the flavorful browned bits from the baking sheet.

Chicken Thighs Roasted with Rosemary, Red Onions & Red Potatoes

Serves four.

I love this with the full half-teaspoon of red pepper flakes—the heat is a wonderful contrast to the sweetness of the orange—but feel free to use less.

- 2 navel oranges**
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more as needed**
- ½ teaspoon dried chile flakes**
- 8 baby red potatoes (12 ounces), halved**
- 2 medium red onions, sliced into ½-inch-thick circles**
- 2 5-inch sprigs fresh rosemary, plus ¾ teaspoon minced**
- 8 chicken thighs (about 6 ounces each), trimmed of excess fat and skin**

Heat the oven to 425°F. Finely grate 1 teaspoon orange zest. Stir together the zest, oil, 1 teaspoon salt, and the chile flakes in a small bowl.

On one end of a large rimmed baking sheet, toss 1 tablespoon of the oil mixture with the potatoes, onions, and 1 sprig rosemary; separate the onions into

rings, and spread the onions and potatoes into a single layer as much as possible. At the other end of the baking sheet, arrange the chicken skin side up and brush the tops of the chicken thighs with the remaining oil mixture. Tuck the remaining rosemary sprig between a couple of thighs and sprinkle the thighs and vegetables lightly with salt.

Roast for 20 minutes. Baste the chicken with the pan drippings using a brush and stir the potatoes and onions. Continue to roast, basting and stirring every 10 minutes, until the chicken skin looks crisp and golden and the potatoes are lightly browned in spots, about 30 minutes more.

Meanwhile, peel the oranges with a sharp knife, making sure you've removed the pith and membrane. Slice crosswise into roughly ½-inch circles and then chop into roughly ½-inch pieces, discarding any thick center membranes. Transfer to a small bowl and stir in ¼ teaspoon of the minced rosemary.

When the chicken is done, remove the rosemary sprigs from the pan and discard. Stir the potatoes and onions, transfer with a slotted spoon to a serving bowl, and stir in the remaining ½ teaspoon minced rosemary. Baste the chicken and transfer with tongs to a serving platter, top with the orange mixture, and serve hot.

DRINK CHOICES Try a youthful, fruity Pinot Noir from Oregon or California. Good choices include the 2002 Chehalem "Three Vineyards" from Oregon or the 2003 Hahn Estates Pinot, Monterey (\$14).





Do-ahead tip:

For this recipe and the one on p. 36, you can marinate the chicken as soon as you get home from work and cook it in an hour or two. Or you can toss all the ingredients together quickly in the morning and let the chicken marinate in the refrigerator all day—the recipes say to turn the chicken occasionally, but if you're not home during the day, don't worry about that.

Burnished Chicken Thighs with Roasted Sweet Potatoes, Parsnips & Shallots

Serves four.

Add a pinch of caraway seeds to the vegetables before roasting for an interesting twist.

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 3 tablespoons whole-grain Dijon mustard**
- 1½ tablespoons balsamic vinegar**
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt, plus more as needed**
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**
- 8 chicken thighs (about 6 ounces each), trimmed of excess fat and skin**
- 1 medium-large (12 ounces) sweet potato, peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces**

- 4 medium parsnips (6 ounces total), peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces**
- 4 small shallots, lobes separated, peeled and halved through the root end**
- 3 strips bacon**
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**

Stir together the oil, mustard, vinegar, ¼ teaspoon of the salt, and ¼ teaspoon of the pepper in a large bowl. Add the chicken and toss to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and marinate in the refrigerator, turning occasionally, for at least 1 hour and up to 8 hours.

Heat the oven to 425°F.

Arrange the chicken skin side up on one end of a large

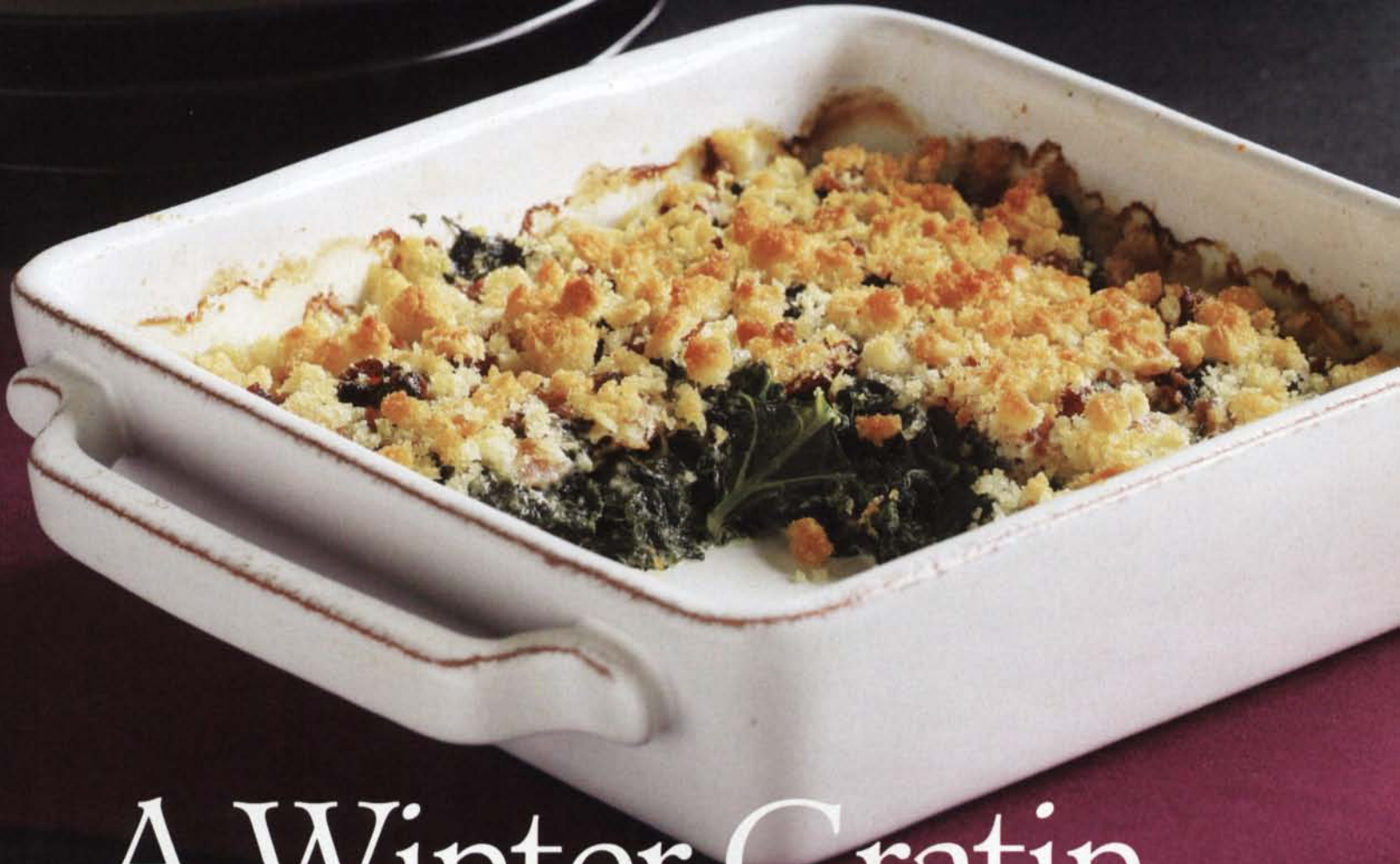
rimmed baking sheet and drizzle with any remaining marinade. At the other end of the baking sheet, toss together the sweet potato, parsnips, shallots, and the remaining ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Spread into a single layer. Sprinkle the chicken and vegetables lightly with a little more salt and roast for 20 minutes. Baste the chicken with the pan juices using a brush and stir the vegetables. Continue to roast, basting and stirring every 10 minutes, until the chicken is burnished—deeply browned—and the vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes more.

Meanwhile, cook the bacon over medium heat in a large skillet until crisp, 5 to 8 minutes. Drain the bacon on paper towels. When the bacon is cool enough to handle, crumble it and toss with the parsley.

When the chicken is done, stir the vegetables and transfer them to a serving bowl with a slotted spoon. Toss with half of the bacon mixture. Baste the chicken and transfer with tongs to a serving platter. Sprinkle with the remaining bacon mixture, and serve hot.

DRINK CHOICES A fruity Grenache blend would pair well with the sweet element from the sweet potatoes. Try the 2003 Mas Grand Plagniol Rouge Tradition, Costières de Nîmes (\$10) or the 2003 Domaine de l'Ameillaud Côtes du Rhône (\$10).

Lori Longbotham is a New York City-based food writer and recipe developer. ♦



A Winter Gratin Everyone Will Love

A creamy, crumb-topped gratin, with your choice of greens, is a side dish to please even the pickiest

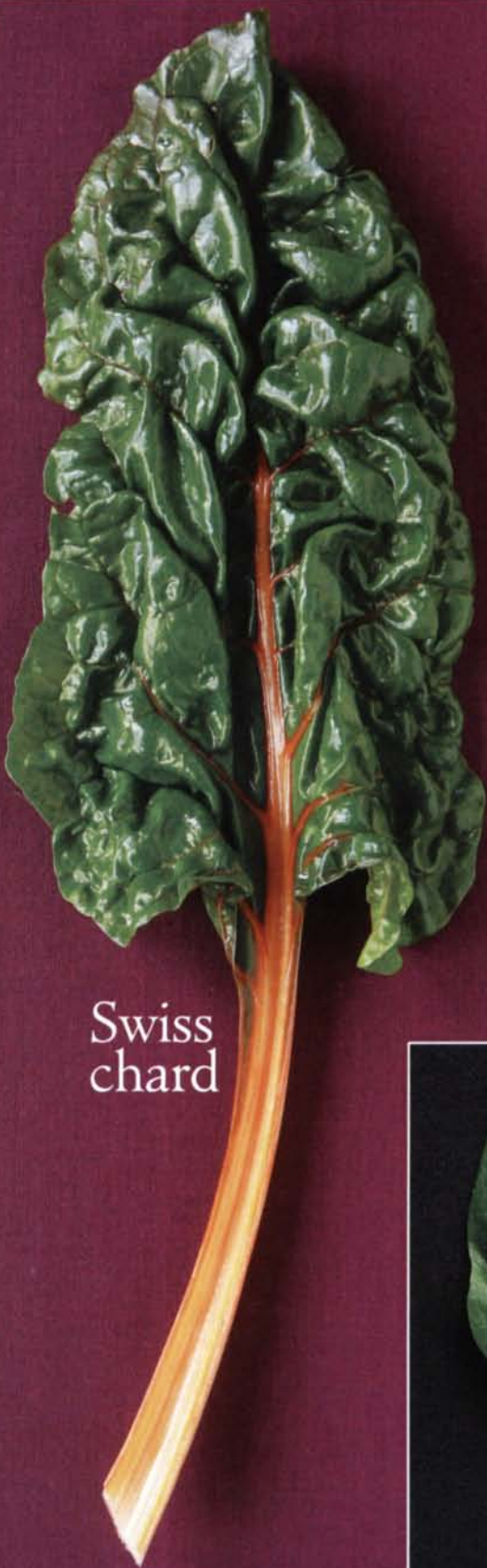
BY SUSIE MIDDLETON

When you grow up—or let's just say pass the age of 12—it becomes more and more embarrassing to admit you don't like vegetables, especially ones that everyone knows are good for you, such as hearty winter greens like spinach, chard, and kale. They've been hailed as the secret to a long life, better eyesight,

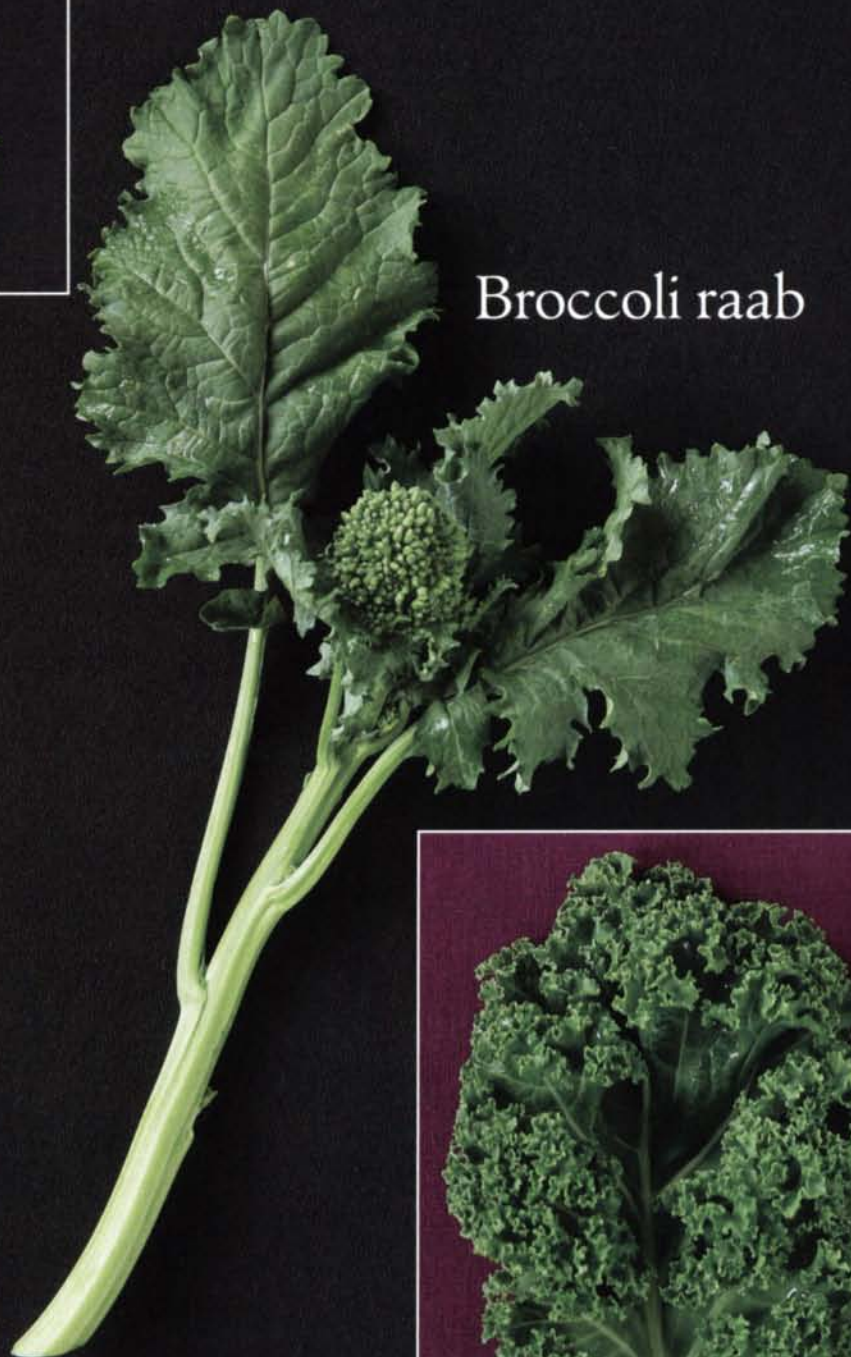
big muscles...even younger-looking skin (okay, I made that last one up). But still, there's a not-so-silent majority who won't eat them. I've got the solution. It's a bit of a cheat because it involves heavy cream, rich cheese, and buttery breadcrumbs. But trust me, there isn't an adult or a kid who won't like my winter greens gratin. This may be the most delicious, if indulgent, way to cram in those antioxidants.

But as a cook, what really excites me about this dish is its versatility. It's more like a formula than a recipe, since you can pick from a number of different greens and substitute different cheeses to customize your gratin. You only need to stick to the measurements in the main recipe on p. 41, and you'll have a golden, crusty, creamy side dish to serve with your favorite roast or chops.

Customize your gratin
by choosing any one of
these greens



Swiss
chard



Broccoli raab



Spinach



Kale

How to prep & cook the greens

To get the 2 cups of cooked greens you need for the gratin, be sure to start out with the amount of raw greens specified below.

Cut off and discard the tough stems (use a small, sharp paring knife and trim around the stem). Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil, submerge all the greens, and cook just until tender (see cooking times below). Drain well and then spread on a towel to absorb excess moisture. If the greens still seem very wet, squeeze them gently to remove excess liquid.

Spinach

START WITH: 1 pound mature spinach, stems removed and leaves roughly chopped to yield about 7 cups tightly packed (or 12 ounces)

COOK FOR: 30 seconds, just until wilted

Broccoli raab

START WITH: a 1-pound bunch broccoli raab, tough lower stems removed (almost half the bunch), as well as any discolored leaves, and the rest very roughly chopped to yield about 6 heaping cups

COOK FOR: 2 minutes

Swiss chard

START WITH: 1¾ pounds chard, stems cut away and reserved for another use (slice, freeze, and add to your next vegetable soup) and leaves roughly chopped to yield about 9½ cups (or 12 ounces)

COOK FOR: 1 minute

Kale

START WITH: 1¼ pounds kale, tough stems trimmed away, leaves roughly chopped to yield 6 cups tightly packed

COOK FOR: 8 minutes

Creamy Winter Greens Gratin

Serves four as a side dish.

You can make this gratin with your choice of spinach, Swiss chard, kale, or broccoli raab. You'll need to boil the greens first, following the directions at left. You can also substitute any hard cheese for the Parmigiano.

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
½ cup fresh breadcrumbs
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 cup heavy cream
2 cloves garlic, smashed and peeled
2½ ounces bacon (about 3 strips) or 1½ ounces thinly sliced pancetta
2 cups cooked winter greens (spinach, Swiss chard, kale, or broccoli raab; see cooking directions at left)
⅓ cup freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano, or a combination of Parmigiano and another hard cheese like Gruyère, Emmental, or aged Gouda

Heat the oven to 400°F. Have ready a shallow 4-cup ceramic gratin dish or casserole dish (any shape is fine as long as it's shallow). Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter and toss it in a small bowl with the breadcrumbs and a pinch of kosher salt and a little ground pepper; set aside.

In a medium saucepan, bring the cream and garlic to a boil over medium-high heat (watch that it doesn't boil over), immediately lower the heat, and simmer vigorously until the cream reduces to about ¾ cup, 4 to 8 minutes. (Don't over-reduce.) Take the pan off the heat and remove and discard the garlic cloves. Let the cream cool slightly, stirring occasionally to keep a skin from forming. Season with ¼ teaspoon of salt and a few grinds of fresh pepper.

Meanwhile, in a large nonstick skillet, cook the bacon or pancetta over medium heat until crisped and browned, about 7 minutes. Transfer to paper towels, and carefully pour off most of the excess fat in the skillet (but don't wipe it clean). Return the skillet to medium heat. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon butter to the skillet and let it melt. Add the cooked greens, season with ¼ teaspoon salt if using bacon (omit the salt if using pancetta), and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Transfer the greens to the gratin dish and spread them evenly.

Crumble the bacon or pancetta over the greens. Sprinkle on the cheese. Pour the seasoned cream over all, and top with the buttered breadcrumbs. Bake until the gratin is brown and bubbly, about 25 minutes. Let rest for 10 to 15 minutes before serving.

reader review

A *Fine Cooking* reader gave this recipe a real-world test. Here are the results:

"Delicious! I used spinach and Parmigiano Reggiano for my gratin, and the taste and the texture were exquisite. The garlic, the crispness of the crust, the overall flavor...my dinner guests wanted to know when they were going to be invited back!"

—Jim Lorrigan
Shelburne, Ontario



Serve up minis

For a change, serve these gratins individually. Just divide ingredients among four small gratin dishes (for sources, see p. 76) and bake as directed above.

Susie Middleton is the editor of *Fine Cooking*. ♦

Three ways to Braise Short Ribs for the Best Flavor



BY MOLLY STEVENS

If I had to list my top-ten cold-weather comfort foods, beef short ribs would rank first, second, and maybe even third, and I know I'm not alone. What makes this often-overlooked cut so remarkable is its dense, well-marbled meat and its connective tissue, which softens as it cooks to help create

a velvety, deeply flavored sauce. Just the mere suggestion of braised short ribs can elicit hushed groans of pleasure from anyone who has experienced their exquisite taste and tenderness.

The first thing you need to know about cooking short ribs is that they must be braised, an age-old technique that

requires more patience than accuracy. The magic of braising (slowly cooking in a covered pot with a little bit of liquid) is that it transforms the tough, rugged texture of short ribs into fork-tender meat and creates a sumptuous sauce along the way. Attempting to cook short ribs by any other method, such as roasting

Marinating the ribs overnight leaves the meat deeply infused with the flavors of wine and spice, and the red wine helps the beef brown beautifully, giving the whole dish a deeper color.

Red Wine Marinated Braised Short Ribs

Serves four to six.

- 2 large cloves garlic, smashed and peeled**
- 2 large sprigs thyme**
- 2 strips orange zest (about 1 inch wide, 3 to 4 inches long)**
- 2 bay leaves**
- ¼ teaspoon allspice berries, coarsely crushed in a mortar or with the side of a chef's knife**
- ¼ teaspoon black peppercorns**
- 4 whole cloves**
- 1 750-ml. bottle hearty, dry red wine such as Zinfandel**
- 4 to 5 pounds meaty bone-in beef short ribs, preferably English style (see sidebar p. 47)**
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt; more as needed**
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 medium to large yellow onion, coarsely chopped**
- 1 medium celery stalk, coarsely chopped**
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and coarsely chopped**
- Freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste**
- 2 cups homemade or low-salt canned beef or chicken broth**
- 2 tablespoons red-wine vinegar; more to taste**

Marinate the ribs: Make a sachet by wrapping the garlic, thyme, orange zest, bay leaves, allspice, peppercorns, and cloves in a 6-inch square of cheesecloth, pouch style. Tie the sachet closed with cooking twine. Pour the wine into a medium saucepan, add the sachet, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer gently for 10 minutes. Set the marinade aside to cool.

Meanwhile, trim away any excess fat from the top of each rib down to the first layer of meat, but don't remove the silverskin or tough-looking tissue that hold the ribs together or onto the bone. Put the ribs in a container wide enough to fit them in a snug single layer (a 9x13-inch dish works well), season with 1½ teaspoons salt, and pour

over the cooled marinade and sachet. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 12 to 24 hours, turning the ribs once or twice.

Cook the ribs: Position a rack in the lower third of the oven and heat the oven to 300°F. Remove the ribs from the marinade, reserving the marinade and the sachet. Pat the ribs dry thoroughly with paper towels. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a 5- to 6-quart Dutch oven (or other heavy pot with a lid) over medium heat until hot. Add only as many ribs as will fit without touching, and brown them, turning with tongs, until nicely browned on all sides, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer to a platter, and continue until all the ribs are browned.

Pour off and discard most of the fat from the pot. Add the remaining tablespoon of oil and return the pot to medium heat. Add the onion, celery, and carrot, season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until browned in spots, about 8 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste, and cook for 2 minutes, stirring. Add half of the reserved wine marinade, increase the heat to high, stir to scrape up any browned bits, and bring to a boil. Continue to boil until the liquid is reduced by half, 2 to 4 minutes. Add the remaining marinade and reduce again by about half, another 3 to 5 minutes. Add the broth and vinegar and boil for 3 minutes.

Return the ribs to the pot, preferably in a single layer, along with any accumulated juices and the sachet. Crumple a large sheet of parchment and smooth it out again. Arrange it over the pot, pressing it down so it nearly touches the ribs, allowing any overhang to extend up and over the edges of the pot. Set the lid in place, and transfer to the oven. Braise, turning the ribs with tongs every 45 minutes, until the meat is fork-tender and pulling away from the bone, about 2½ hours. Use tongs or a slotted spoon to carefully transfer the ribs to a serving dish. Don't worry if some bones slip out. Cover loosely with foil to keep warm.

Make the sauce: Strain the braising liquid through a fine mesh sieve into a 4-cup measuring cup, pressing gently on the solids and sachet to extract the liquid. When the fat has risen to the top, tilt the measuring cup so that you can spoon off and discard as much of the fat as you can. You should have about 1 cup of sauce that's the consistency of a vinaigrette (only slightly thick). If the sauce seems thin and the flavor weak, transfer to a saucepan and simmer over medium-high heat until reduced to an intensity and consistency you like. Taste and season with salt and pepper. If the sauce needs more punch, add a splash of vinegar. Spoon the sauce over the ribs and serve.

Marinate



or grilling, would leave them impossibly tough. For guidance on buying the best short ribs, see the sidebar on p. 47.

While the braising technique ensures fall-apart tenderness, I use a few other tricks to boost the flavor of my short ribs. For instance, in the Red Wine Marinated Braised Short Ribs on p. 43, I treat the ribs to an overnight soak in a spiced wine marinade, which leaves the meat deeply infused with flavor. In the Asian-Glazed Braised Short Ribs on p. 46, I rub the ribs with an aromatic blend of spices the day before braising. The spices permeate the richly flavored beef, adding a heady, exotic element to the flavor of the whole dish; then I paint the ribs with a sweet glaze and run them under the broiler just before serving. I also like to play around with how I finish braised short ribs; for instance, I create a rich ragù to serve over pasta (at right) by shredding the cooked meat and adding it back into the sauce.

Braising Successfully

Whichever recipe you choose, here are a few braising pointers:

CHOOSE A HEAVY POT with a lid (ideally a Dutch oven) that will hold the ribs snugly. They can overlap (you can also position them on their sides), but don't stack them in a double layer.

BE SURE THE MEAT IS THOROUGHLY DRIED before browning. Wet meat will stick to the pan and won't brown evenly.

BROWN THE RIBS over medium heat; it should take 3 to 4 minutes per side. If the ribs brown too quickly over heat that's too high, you could scorch the meat and the pan; brown the ribs too slowly and the meat will dry out.

COVER THE POT with a sheet of parchment before setting the lid in place. The parchment reduces the headspace in the pot, which helps produce a more concentrated sauce. Extending the parchment over the sides helps tighten the seal of the lid.



make-ahead tip: For the ragù, you can make the recipe all the way through and refrigerate; for the red wine marinated braised ribs and the Asian-glazed ribs, refrigerate once you've finished the braise, but hold off on finishing the sauce or glazing until you've reheated the ribs.

Make a ragù



Short Rib Ragù

Serves six.

I've turned these braised short ribs into a ragù that's fabulous over tube-shaped pasta and sprinkled with Parmesan (you might need to reserve some of the pasta cooking water for loosening the sauce). But you can also leave the ribs whole and serve them, along with their sauce, over mashed potatoes or polenta.

3 to 4 pounds meaty bone-in beef short ribs, preferably English style (see sidebar p. 47)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
3 ounces thickly sliced pancetta (about 3 ¼-inch-thick slices) or 3 slices thick-cut bacon, cut into ½-inch squares
1 medium yellow onion, diced (about 1 heaping cup)
1 celery stalk, diced (about ½ cup)
1 carrot, diced (about ½ cup)
½ cup sliced white mushrooms
3 large cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
2 tablespoons tomato paste
Pinch crushed red pepper flakes
½ cup dry white wine or dry vermouth
1 28-ounce can whole peeled tomatoes

Position a rack in the lower third of the oven and heat the oven to 300°F.

Cook the ribs: Trim away any excess fat from the top of each rib down to the first layer of meat, but don't remove the silverskin or tough-looking tissue that hold the ribs together or onto the bone. Pat the ribs dry with paper towels, and season them with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a 5- to 6-quart Dutch oven (or other heavy pot with a lid) over medium heat until hot. Add only as many ribs

as will fit without touching, and brown them on all sides, turning with tongs until nicely browned, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer to a platter, and continue until all the ribs are browned.

Pour off and discard most of the fat from the pot. Return the pot to medium heat, and add the pancetta or bacon. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the pancetta or bacon has rendered some of its fat but is not crisp, about 3 minutes. Add the onion, celery, carrot, mushrooms, and garlic, and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 8 minutes. Add the tomato paste and red pepper flakes, and cook for 2 minutes, stirring. Add the wine, increase the heat to medium-high, stir to scrape up any browned bits on the bottom of the pot, and bring to a boil. Add the tomatoes and their juices and bring to a simmer.

Transfer the ribs to the oven: Return the short ribs (and any juices) to the pot in a single layer, nestling them into the sauce. Crumple a large sheet of parchment and smooth it out again. Arrange it over the pot, pressing it down so it nearly touches the ribs, allowing any overhang to extend up and over the edges of the pot. Set the lid in place, and transfer to the oven. Braise, turning the ribs with tongs every 45 minutes, until fork-tender and the meat is pulling away from the bone, about 2½ hours.

Make the ragù: Use tongs or a slotted spoon to carefully transfer the ribs to a shallow baking dish or wide bowl. Set aside until just cool enough to handle. Skim any visible surface fat from the braising liquid and bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat. If the tomatoes haven't broken up, break them up with a wooden spoon. If the sauce seems watery, increase the heat to medium-high and simmer to thicken. If not, keep it warm. Taste for salt and pepper.

When the beef is cool enough to handle, remove the meat from the bones and the bands of connective tissue that encircled the bones. Chop the meat into bite-size chunks or pull into large strips. Return the meat to the sauce, and keep warm until ready to serve, or if making ahead, cool and refrigerate.

Pull the tender meat from the bone, shred it, and add it back to the sauce to create a complex and rich ragù for pasta.

Asian-Glazed Braised Short Ribs

Serves four to six.

- 4 to 5 pounds meaty bone-in beef short ribs, preferably English style (see sidebar at right)**
- 1 tablespoon five-spice powder (see p. 67)**
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt; more as needed**
- 2 teaspoons light or dark brown sugar**
- 1 teaspoon coriander seeds, toasted and ground**
- ½ teaspoon cumin seeds, toasted and ground**
- ½ teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper**
- 3 tablespoons peanut oil**
- 2 large yellow onions, coarsely chopped**
- 3 large cloves garlic, smashed and peeled**
- 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh ginger**
- 1 12-ounce bottle lager beer at room temperature; more if needed**
- 1 cup homemade or low-salt canned beef or chicken broth; more if needed**
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce**
- 1 bay leaf**
- ¼ cup honey**
- 2 tablespoons fresh orange juice**
- 2 tablespoons ketchup**
- 1 teaspoon fish sauce**

Rub the ribs a day ahead: Trim any excess fat from the top of each rib down to the first layer of meat, but don't take off any of the silverskin or the tough-looking bits that hold the ribs together or onto the bone. Combine the five-spice powder, salt, brown sugar, coriander, cumin, and black pepper in a small bowl. Rub this mixture all over the ribs. Put the ribs in a single layer on a tray or baking dish, cover loosely with plastic, and refrigerate for 12 to 24 hours.

Cook the ribs: Place a rack in the lower third of the oven and heat the oven to 300°F.

Pat the ribs dry with a paper towel, but don't rub off the spices. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a 5- to 6-quart Dutch oven (or other heavy pot with a lid) over medium heat until hot. Add only as many ribs as will fit without touching, and brown them, turning with tongs until nicely browned on all sides, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer to a platter, and continue until all the ribs are browned.

Pour off and discard most of the fat from the pot. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil and return the pot to medium heat. Add the onions, season lightly with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions soften and start to brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the garlic and ginger, and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 2 minutes more.

Add the beer and bring to a full boil over high heat. Boil for 2 minutes, scraping the bottom of the pot with a wooden spoon to dislodge any caramelized bits. Pour in the broth and soy sauce, return to a boil, and reduce the heat to a simmer. Add the bay leaf. Return

Brush on a glaze



the ribs to the pot, preferably in a single layer, along with any juices. The ribs should be at least three-quarters submerged in the liquid. If necessary, add a bit more beer or broth.

Crumple a large sheet of parchment and smooth it out again. Arrange it over the pot, pressing it down so it nearly touches the ribs, allowing any overhang to extend up and over the edges of the pot. Put the lid in place and transfer the pot to the oven. Braise, turning the ribs with tongs every 45 minutes, until the meat is fork-tender and pulling away from the bone, about 2½ hours.

Make the glaze: While the ribs are braising, measure the honey in a 1-cup liquid measure, add the orange juice, ketchup, and fish sauce, and combine using a whisk or a fork.

Use tongs or a slotted spoon to carefully transfer the ribs (meaty side up) to a flame-proof gratin dish or a shallow baking pan that is large enough to accommodate the ribs in a single layer. Don't worry if some bones slip out. Cover loosely with foil to keep warm.

Strain the braising liquid through a fine mesh sieve into a 4-cup measuring cup, pressing gently on the solids with a spoon to extract the liquid. When the fat has risen to the top, tilt the cup so you can spoon off as much fat as you can. You should have about 1 cup of thin but flavorful sauce. If necessary, simmer the sauce in a saucepan over medium-high heat until the flavor is concentrated to your liking. Season to taste. Keep warm.

Position a rack 6 inches from the broiler and heat the broiler to high. Generously brush the honey-orange juice glaze on the tops of the ribs. Slide the ribs under the broiler and broil until the surface of the ribs develops a shiny, almost caramelized glaze and you can hear them sizzle, about 4 minutes. Serve with the sauce on the side for dipping, or drizzle it over the ribs.





Brush the ribs with a glaze and run them under the broiler just before serving. The pungent-sweet glaze complements the exotic background flavor of the spice rub.

Buying short ribs



Short ribs are the meaty ends of the beef ribs from the hard-working chest and front shoulders of cattle. The meatiest short ribs with the best ratio of fat and bone come from the chuck—the labels might say beef chuck short ribs or arm short ribs. Look for well-marbled, meaty ribs, firmly attached to the bone, and without a huge amount of surface fat.

You may find short ribs cut two ways: English style, which are 2- to 4-inch segments with one section of rib bone, or flanken style, which are 1½- to 2-inch strips containing multiple bone seg-

ments. The recipes here were tested with English-style ribs, so I recommend that you use them, too. But if you can only find the flanken-style ribs, it's okay—I use them interchangeably. Avoid boneless short ribs because meat cooked on the bone will provide the best flavor.

When trimming the short ribs, remove only the thickest layers of external fat. Don't remove the internal layers of connective tissue or the ribs will begin to fall apart, and don't remove the silverskin or membrane that holds the meat to the bone.

Molly Stevens is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking. ♦



Make big, beautiful muffins with oversize tops, just like the ones you see at the bakery.

One Versatile Batter, All Your Favorite Muffins

A master batter plus your choice of flavorings gives you a dozen moist, tender muffins just the way you like them

BY JOANNE CHANG

Whenever people ask me how we come up with the recipes at my bakery, Flour, I tell them that we use the Goldilocks approach: We start with a recipe that sounds promising but is perhaps too crumbly or dense, or needs more butter or spice, and then we'll adjust it until we're in love with the final product. It can take one or two tries, or many, many more, but I've found that the simplest recipes are often the most challenging to get "just right."

Our blueberry muffins are a perfect example. We wanted them to be tender and light but still sturdy enough to hold copious amounts of fresh fruit. It took us more than two years to hit upon a version that we're happy with, but the endless tweaking was worth it. This recipe has become our powerhouse. Not only does it make fabulous blueberry muffins, but it's also adaptable enough to turn into apricot-almond muffins, pineapple-coconut muffins, and chocolate chip-raspberry muffins. Actually, the batter can take any number of flavor variations, so this one recipe is the base for all of our fruit muffins. The method on pp. 50-51 shows you how to mix the master batter and then how to choose and fold in your choice of ingredients so that you can create your own favorite muffins.

The best thing is that these muffins couldn't be easier to make. That said, there

are a few tips that can ensure that your muffins are as delicious as can be.

Room temperature ingredients are key.

This batter uses melted butter, and if the other wet ingredients are too cold, the butter will solidify and won't blend in well. Also, whisk the wet ingredients together before adding them to the dry; combining them thoroughly helps them mix evenly into the dry ingredients.

Don't overmix the batter. Add the fruit and other flavorings before the batter is fully mixed. This way, the wet ingredients, dry ingredients, and add-ins come together at the same time, so you avoid overmixing. This results in a more tender crumb—overmixing will make the muffins tough.

Overfill the cups. The batter should mound higher than the rims of the cups by about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch; this makes the batter bake up into those great big bakery-style muffin tops. The tops might meld together while baking, but that's okay—once they've cooled, just cut them apart with a table knife.

A simple glaze finishes the muffins. I really like the added flavor and touch of sweetness you get from a glaze. Plus, it helps keep the muffins moist. Glaze the muffins while they're still slightly warm, which makes the glaze spread easier. Just don't glaze the muffins while they're still hot, or the glaze will melt right off.



Six great flavor pairings

- ❖ Blueberries, lemon zest, lemon glaze
- ❖ Pineapple, coconut, pineapple glaze
- ❖ Bananas, walnuts, cinnamon glaze
- ❖ Cranberries, orange zest, pecans, orange glaze
- ❖ Apricots, almond extract, sliced almonds, plain glaze
- ❖ Pears, ground ginger, crystallized ginger, ginger glaze

Five steps to moist, delicious muffins

Makes one dozen muffins.

1 Start the batter.

Read the method from start to finish and gather your ingredients before you start cooking.

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Lightly oil (or spray with cooking spray) the top of a standard 12-cup muffin tin (cups should be 2¾ inches across and about 1 inch deep; for sources, see p. 76) and line with paper or foil baking cups.

1 pound (3½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour

4 teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon table salt

1⅓ cups granulated sugar

5 ounces (10 tablespoons) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly

1 cup whole milk, at room temperature

1 cup crème fraîche or sour cream, at room temperature

2 large eggs, at room temperature

1 large egg yolk, at room temperature

In a large mixing bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt; mix well. In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together the sugar, butter, milk, crème fraîche or sour cream, eggs, and egg yolk until well combined.

Pour the wet ingredients into the dry, and fold gently with a rubber spatula just until the dry ingredients are mostly moistened (the batter will be lumpy)—there should still be quite a few streaks of dry flour.

2 Add your choice of flavorings, fruits, chocolate, and nuts.

Choose add-ins from the lists at right and below, sprinkle them on the batter, and fold them in until just combined. (The batter will still be lumpy; don't try to smooth it out.)

Do not overmix.

Flavorings

(Choose 1 or 2)

- ❖ Almond extract—½ teaspoon
- ❖ Ground cinnamon—¾ teaspoon
- ❖ Coconut—¾ cup dried, sweetened, shredded or flaked
- ❖ Crystallized ginger—⅓ cup finely chopped
- ❖ Ground ginger—¾ teaspoon
- ❖ Lemon zest—2 teaspoons finely grated
- ❖ Orange zest—2 teaspoons finely grated
- ❖ Vanilla extract—1 teaspoon

Fruit & chocolate

(Choose 1 or 2, 1½ cups total)

- ❖ Apricot halves, fresh (or canned, drained very well and patted dry), coarsely chopped
- ❖ Bananas, thinly sliced
- ❖ Blueberries, fresh or frozen (no need to thaw)
- ❖ Cranberries, fresh or frozen (no need to thaw), coarsely chopped
- ❖ Granny Smith apples, peeled and coarsely chopped
- ❖ Peaches, coarsely chopped
- ❖ Pears, coarsely chopped (no need to peel)
- ❖ Pineapple, fresh (or canned, drained very well and patted dry), coarsely chopped
- ❖ Raspberries, fresh or frozen (no need to thaw)
- ❖ Chocolate chips

Nuts

(optional)

(If using, choose one, up to ¾ cup)

- ❖ Pecan pieces, toasted
- ❖ Sliced almonds, toasted
- ❖ Walnut pieces, toasted



3 Fill the tin and bake the muffins.

Use an ice cream scoop if you have one with a “sweeper” in it (for sources, see p. 76); otherwise, use two spoons to spoon the batter into the muffin cups, distributing all of the batter evenly. The batter should mound higher than the rim of the cups by about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. Bake until the muffins are golden brown and spring back lightly when you press the middle, 30 to 35 minutes. (The muffin tops will probably meld together.) Let the tin cool on a rack for 15 to 20 minutes.

4 Make the glaze.

The glaze can be made up to two days in advance; store in an airtight container at room temperature.

12½ ounces (3 cups) confectioners' sugar

One of the glaze flavorings below

Put the confectioners' sugar in a small mixing bowl. Add the glaze flavoring, choosing from the list below, and whisk until smooth. The glaze should be thin enough that it will drip off of a spoon; if it's more like a spreadable icing, thin it with water or the appropriate liquid, 1 tablespoon at a time.

Glaze flavorings

(Choose 1)

PLAIN—6 tablespoons water

MAPLE—1 cup pure maple syrup

LEMON—6 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

ORANGE—6 tablespoons fresh orange juice

PINEAPPLE—6 tablespoons pineapple juice

CINNAMON—6 tablespoons water, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon

GINGER—6 tablespoons water, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground ginger

5 Glaze the muffins.

When the muffins have cooled down but are still slightly warm, use a table knife to separate the tops, and then invert the pan and pop out the muffins. Put the muffins on a rack over foil to catch any glaze that drips off. Dab the glaze on the muffins with a pastry brush, or spoon the glaze on and let it drip over the sides. It should leave a smooth, somewhat translucent coating. You may not need all of the glaze. Wait 20 to 30 minutes for the glaze to set; it won't dry completely.

The muffins are best served on the day they're made. If keeping longer, store in an airtight container.

Freshly baked and drizzled with glaze, these muffins are a perfect morning snack. They'll keep for a few days in an airtight container, but their first day is their best.



Joanne Chang is the chef-owner of Flour Bakery + Café in Boston. ♦



Make savory dishes even more mouthwatering with lemons as the star

BY JENNIFER MCLAGAN

I grew up in Australia with a big lemon tree in my backyard, and I picked lemons whenever I wanted—which was often, since I added them to almost everything I cooked. Although I no longer have the lemon tree, lemons still play a starring role in my cooking. Nothing perks up my mood and my meals like a bowl of sunny yellow lemons, especially in late winter and early spring. The way I see it, a little lemon (or a lot) brings out the best in almost any dish. Perhaps you've noticed it, too. When you put lemons in the spotlight, your cooking has a little more edge, a little more interest.

There's nothing tricky about using lemons as a main ingredient. It can be a simple matter of using

more lemon juice or zest or both in a recipe. Or of using the whole lemon—juice, pulp, peel and all—to flavor a dish. Or of using lemons in a different way: for example, caramelized lemon slices as a garnish for meat, as shown at right.

Whichever approach you choose, you'll highlight a different, delicious attribute of lemons: the bright, refreshing qualities of lemon juice, or the intensely citrusy flavor of the zest, or the combined appeal of a whole lemon. And in the recipes that follow, you'll discover lots of ideas for putting lemons at center stage.



Pork Scaloppine with Prosciutto, Sage & Caramelized Lemon

Serves two to three.

Caramelizing the lemon slices softens their acidity and makes them edible, peel and all. Eating them is optional, but I highly recommend it. The lemons' tangy, slightly bitter flavor is a bright complement to the rich, salty prosciutto in this recipe.

2 to 3 lemons

1 small pork tenderloin (about ¾ pound)

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

18 medium or 12 large fresh sage leaves

6 slices prosciutto, preferably imported

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

3 tablespoons vegetable oil

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

⅓ cup sweet vermouth; more to taste

½ cup homemade or low-salt chicken broth

Trim a thick slice off each end of one of the lemons, and then cut ⅛-inch-thick slices from the lemon center—you need 12 slices, so you may need a second lemon. Juice the ends and enough of the remaining lemons to obtain ¼ cup juice. Set the slices and juice aside.

Heat the oven to 200°F. Set a heat-proof serving platter and a baking sheet lined with a paper towel in the oven.

Trim and cut the pork tenderloin

into 6 thick medallions of roughly equal weight. Place a piece of plastic wrap on the countertop. Put one pork piece on top of the plastic with one cut side up and cover with a second piece of plastic wrap. With a meat mallet (or heavy skillet), pound the meat into ¼-inch-thick scaloppine. Repeat with the other pieces. Sprinkle both sides lightly with salt and pepper. Top each scaloppine with two to three sage leaves and then a prosciutto slice, folding any of the overlap underneath the pork scaloppine.

Put the flour in a shallow bowl. Dredge the scaloppine in flour, shaking off the excess.

In a 12-inch skillet, heat 1½ tablespoons of the oil over medium-high heat. Cook three of the scaloppine, prosciutto side down first, until lightly browned and just cooked through, 1½ to 2 minutes per side. Transfer the scaloppine to the baking sheet in the oven. Add the remaining 1½ tablespoons oil and repeat with the three remaining scaloppine. Transfer them to the baking sheet and keep warm in the oven. Remove the pan from the heat and pour off any remaining oil.

Add 1 tablespoon of the butter and let it melt. Add the lemon slices to the pan in a single layer. Return to medium heat and cook the lemon slices until lightly browned on one side, 2 to 4 minutes. Turn the lemon slices and add

2 tablespoons of the vermouth to the pan. Continue to cook until the vermouth cooks down to a glaze, 2 to 3 minutes. (The lemon slices will resemble bicycle wheels, with much of the flesh going into the sauce.) Transfer the lemon slices to the scaloppine in the oven, placing two slices on each one.

Pour the remaining (approximately 3 tablespoons) vermouth into the pan, bring to a boil over medium-high heat, and deglaze the pan by scraping up the browned bits from the bottom. Add the chicken broth and lemon juice and boil until reduced to ¼ cup, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the remaining 1 tablespoon butter.

Taste the sauce for seasoning; if it's too acidic, add a touch more vermouth to the pan.

Transfer the scaloppine to the serving platter, spoon the sauce over, and serve immediately.

Juiced, zested, whole,
and preserved—
there's more than one
way to love a lemon

Getting the most zest...

Thick-skinned lemons, which tend to have pebbly-textured skin, are easiest to zest.

Before zesting, scrub the lemon's skin well to remove any residues (a soak in warm water can help remove any wax coating).

Remove just the thin yellow layer of rind, not the white pith below.

Zest a lemon before you juice it.

I use a vegetable peeler when I want wide strips of zest for adding to slow-cooked dishes.

A channel zester (below) gives you long, skinny strips of zest, but this tool doesn't give you as much zest as a grater does.

I think a rasp-style grater (at left; for sources, see p. 76) is the ideal tool for finely grated zest. It's so easy to use and it gives you the most zest.

Save the flavor: You can freeze lemon zest in a sealed container for up to 3 months.

...and clever ways to use it

- ❖ Add grated zest to bread-crumbs and use for coating cutlets and topping gratins.
- ❖ Mix grated zest into ground meats when making meatballs and hamburgers.
- ❖ Stir grated zest with chopped capers and parsley to top cooked meat and fish.
- ❖ Add a long, wide strip of zest when braising vegetables or meat or when making stock.
- ❖ Make lemon sugar by putting strips of zest in granulated sugar. Use in cookies, cakes, or tea; sprinkle on French toast, or wherever.
- ❖ Make lemon vodka by steeping strips of lemon zest in regular vodka. Taste the vodka regularly and remove the lemon strips when it suits your taste. Or, infuse white wine with zest for aperitifs.
- ❖ Add a strip of zest to your favorite cocktail.



Angel Hair Pasta with Lemon Cream Sauce

Serves four as a first course.

If you happen to have some grappa on hand, this fiery Italian spirit is a delicious alternative for the gin in this recipe.

Kosher salt
2 lemons
1 cup heavy cream
½ cup gin or grappa
12 ounces fresh angel hair pasta
Freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Set a large pot of salted water over high heat and bring to a boil.

Meanwhile, finely grate the zest of one of the lemons; set aside. Cut a thick slice off both ends of the zested lemon to expose the flesh. Stand the fruit upright, then cutting from the top down, remove the peel, including all the white pith. Holding the fruit over a bowl to catch the juice, use a paring knife to cut along either side of each segment to free it from the membranes; let each segment fall into the bowl as you go. Once you've removed all the segments, squeeze any juice from the membranes into the bowl and then discard. Remove the seeds and set the segments aside in another small dish. Measure the juice in the bowl. Cut the remaining lemon in half and squeeze to obtain 2 tablespoons juice total.

In a 12-inch skillet over medium heat, place the cream, gin or grappa, and lemon segments and bring just to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer until the cream thickens slightly, 5 to 8 minutes. Remove from the heat.

When the water boils, cook the pasta according to package directions until just al dente. Drain. Reheat the cream sauce over medium-low heat.

Add the lemon juice to the sauce, along with the drained pasta and half of the grated lemon zest. Toss the pasta in the warm sauce to coat thoroughly. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve in warmed pasta bowls. Sprinkle with the remaining lemon zest and the parsley.



Herb-Roasted Chicken with Lemons

Serves four.

I roast this chicken with lemon wedges, which prop up the chicken in the pan and also add a wonderful flavor to the pan juices. After roasting, the wedges develop a bitterness that isn't for everyone, but if, like me, you appreciate that bitter note, go ahead and serve the lemons alongside the chicken as a garnish.

2 large lemons
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 4½-pound chicken (if there are giblets, save for another use)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 large thyme sprig
1 rosemary sprig
2 large cloves garlic, crushed and peeled
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
2 teaspoons herbes de Provence
¼ to ⅓ cup sweet vermouth
1 cup homemade or low-salt chicken broth
½ teaspoon cornstarch

Heat the oven to 425°F.

Cut the lemons in half crosswise and squeeze 2 tablespoons juice from one half; set the juice aside in a dish. Reserve

the squeezed half for the chicken cavity. Cut each of the 3 remaining halves in half again for a total of 6 pieces.

Coat the bottom of a small flameproof roasting pan with the oil.

Wash and pat the chicken dry. Remove any excess fat. Season the chicken inside and out with salt and pepper.

Put the squeezed lemon half inside the chicken along with the thyme, rosemary, and garlic cloves. Truss the bird by crossing the legs and tying them lightly with string and tucking the wings behind the back.

Brush the chicken all over with the melted butter. Sprinkle with herbes de Provence. Set the chicken on its side in the roasting pan, using the 6 lemon pieces, flesh side down, to support it.

Roast the chicken for 20 minutes, and then turn the bird on its other side, turning the lemon pieces as well to their other flesh side. Roast for another 20 minutes. Turn the bird on its back and turn the lemons skin side down. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F. Add ¼ cup of the vermouth to the pan, stir to mix with the pan juices, and then baste the chicken. Roast the chicken until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest

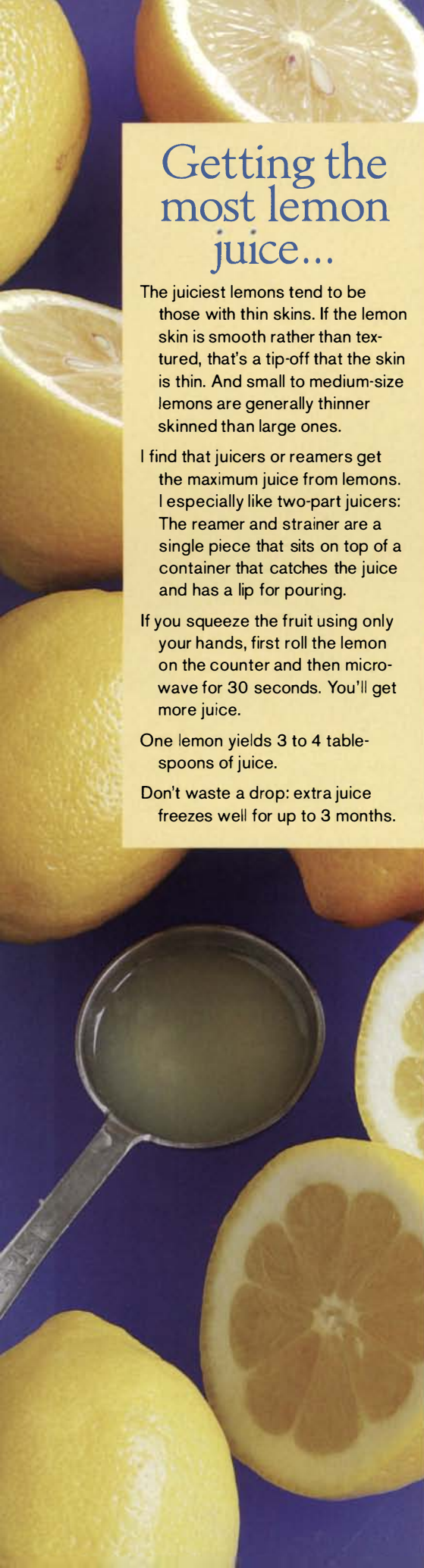
part of the thigh reads 170°F, about 40 minutes more.

Transfer the chicken to a carving board, placing the chicken breast side down. Tent with aluminum foil, and let rest for 10 to 15 minutes.

Discard the roasted lemons. Tip the roasting pan and spoon out and discard as much fat as you can, leaving behind the juices. Set the pan over medium-high heat. Add the chicken broth and deglaze the pan by scraping up the browned bits from the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon. Bring to a boil and reduce to ⅔ cup, about 3 minutes.

Mix the cornstarch and 1 tablespoon of the reserved lemon juice in a dish. Whisk this into the pan mixture. Return to a boil for about two minutes to thicken, and then remove the pan from the heat.

Remove the trussing string from the chicken and carve the chicken. (Discard the herbs, lemon, and garlic from the cavity.) Add any juices from the chicken to the sauce. Taste the sauce, and adjust the seasoning with salt, pepper, and the remaining lemon juice and vermouth. The balance of flavors will depend on the acidity of the lemons and your taste. Serve the chicken with the sauce.



Getting the most lemon juice...

The juiciest lemons tend to be those with thin skins. If the lemon skin is smooth rather than textured, that's a tip-off that the skin is thin. And small to medium-size lemons are generally thinner skinned than large ones.

I find that juicers or reamers get the maximum juice from lemons. I especially like two-part juicers: The reamer and strainer are a single piece that sits on top of a container that catches the juice and has a lip for pouring.

If you squeeze the fruit using only your hands, first roll the lemon on the counter and then microwave for 30 seconds. You'll get more juice.

One lemon yields 3 to 4 tablespoons of juice.

Don't waste a drop: extra juice freezes well for up to 3 months.

...and seven ideas for using it

- ❖ Use lemon juice as you would a pinch of salt: It works wonders as a flavor enhancer.
- ❖ Don't be afraid to add a tablespoon or two of lemon juice to a stew or braise at the end of cooking to bring all the flavors together.
- ❖ Drizzle juice over cooked vegetables just before serving to bring out their flavor.
- ❖ Deglaze your pan with lemon juice and stock to make a tasty sauce or glaze for fish or vegetables.
- ❖ Make lemon butter: Mix lemon juice, zest, and minced garlic into softened butter, chill, and cut into slices to top grilled meats, fish, and vegetables.
- ❖ Make a simple seafood marinade by mixing olive oil, lemon juice, and chopped dill or fennel.
- ❖ Instead of reaching for the vinegar bottle, grab a lemon and replace the vinegar in salad dressing with lemon juice.



Lemony Chicken Noodle Soup with Ginger, Chile & Cilantro

Yields 7 cups; serves four.

Fish sauce varies in its saltiness from brand to brand. So it's a good idea to prepare the soup with the modest amount specified in this recipe, and then at serving time, pass around the fish sauce so people can season their portions with a touch more if they wish.

- 1 lemon**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro**
- 1 teaspoon finely grated fresh ginger**
- 2 serrano chiles, stemmed, halved, and seeded**
- 6 cups homemade or canned low-salt chicken broth**
- 4 ounces fresh Chinese egg noodles (look in the produce section of your supermarket)**
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce (preferably Thai Kitchen brand); more to taste**
- 1 boneless, skinless chicken breast half, cut into ¼-inch-thick slices (this is easier if the chicken is partially frozen)**

Finely grate 1 teaspoon of zest from the lemon and put in a small dish. Add the cilantro and ginger, and mix together. Cut the zested lemon in half and squeeze it to obtain 3 tablespoons of juice.

Thinly slice two of the chile halves crosswise.

In a large saucepan, bring the broth to a boil over medium-high heat. Add the lemon juice, noodles, fish sauce, and the 2 remaining chile halves to the boiling stock. Reduce the heat, cover, and simmer the soup until the noodles are almost cooked, about 3 minutes.

Remove the chile halves. Stir in the chicken and chile slices and return to a boil. Remove the pan from the heat, making sure the chicken slices are just cooked through. Taste and add a touch more fish sauce, if you like. Divide the soup evenly among four serving bowls. Divide the cilantro mixture among the bowls, stir, and serve.

Preserved lemons: a perky condiment that's worth the wait



A staple of the Moroccan kitchen, preserved lemons have a soft, silky-smooth texture and a salty, pickled taste. The only hard thing about making them is waiting for them to cure, which takes about four weeks. But, trust me, they're worth it.

Preserved Lemons

Yields 1 quart.

I make these in a wide-mouthed glass jar that has a glass lid. This way, it's easy to pack the lemons into the jar and no metal comes in contact with the lemon juice and salt. The lemons will keep in the fridge for up to 6 months.

- 6 small thin-skinned lemons**
- ½ cup kosher salt**
- 1 2-inch piece of cinnamon stick**
- 2 cloves**
- 1 bay leaf**
- 1 wide-mouthed quart-size Mason jar, sterilized (for jar sources, see p. 76; for sterilizing instructions, see p. 67)**

Wash and scrub 4 of the lemons thoroughly. Cut them lengthwise into quarters from the tip to within ½ inch of the stem end, so the quarters stay together at one end. (If you don't have a wide-mouthed jar, go ahead and separate the quarters.) Juice the remaining 2 lemons.

Put the cut-up lemons in a large bowl with the salt and toss to coat, packing the salt into the cut edges of the lemon. Re-form them into lemon shape, and pack them tightly into the sterilized jar with any extra salt and the cinnamon, cloves, and bay leaf. Pour in the lemon juice and cover the jar. Store in a cool place for 1 week, tipping the jar once a day to mix in the salt. After a week, put the jar in the refrigerator and keep for 3 more weeks before using. Rinse preserved lemons before using to remove excess salt.

Tomato, Feta & Preserved Lemon Salad

Serves four to six.

This salad is delicious—bursting with bold, briny flavors—but it is definitely salty. I love it served over undressed salad greens with grilled bread on the side.

- 1 to 2 preserved lemons (see recipe above)**
- 1 serrano chile**
- ½ pound feta cheese (preferably more creamy than crumbly), cut into ½-inch cubes (1¾ cups)**
- 1½ cups grape or small cherry tomatoes, halved**
- ½ cup pitted Kalamata olives, rinsed**
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds, toasted**
- 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**

Rinse one of the preserved lemons well, cut it into quarters, and slice the quarters crosswise into thin slices (you need about ½ cup—cut up



another lemon if needed). Remove any seeds. Discard the stem from the chile and then cut it in half lengthwise and remove the seeds. Slice the chile halves thinly crosswise. Put the sliced preserved lemon, chile, feta, tomatoes, and olives in a bowl. Pour in the olive oil and sprinkle with the cumin seeds and parsley. Toss gently to mix and then serve.

Once you've got 'em, there are many ways to enjoy preserved lemons

- ❖ Dice the lemons and mix with a bit of their juices and olive oil for a dressing.
- ❖ Add chopped preserved lemons to braised meats or when making gravy or sauce.
- ❖ Mix finely diced rind into mayonnaise with a little crushed fresh garlic and chopped mint; use as a dip for crudités or serve with fried fish in place of tartar sauce.
- ❖ Stir chopped preserved lemons into guacamole, salsa, relish, chutney, or even tuna salad.
- ❖ Mince the rind and toss with sautéed shrimp or scallops.
- ❖ Mince the rind, mix into softened butter, and use in sandwiches or on grilled fish, steak, veggies, or lobster.
- ❖ Use slices as a garnish for grilled chicken or fish.

*Jennifer McLagan is a food stylist and writer. Her first cookbook, *Bones*, was published last fall.* ♦

Rice Noodle

They're quick, they're filling, and they give a big thrill with surprisingly little effort

BY SU-MEI YU

It's Tuesday afternoon, you're thinking about what to make for dinner, and you're stuck. You want something a little different from the usual, something fresh yet satisfying, and something that you can prep and cook in a half hour or so. For the answer, look no further than rice noodle stir-fries.

If you've eaten at Thai restaurants, you've probably gotten a taste of these wonderful dishes—a mound of slightly transparent noodles tossed with chicken, shrimp, or tofu,

vegetables like green beans or bean sprouts, and salty, tangy, and spicy condiments like fish sauce, vinegar, and chiles. The most famous rice noodle stir-fry of all time has to be pad thai, but there are countless others. Once you try one of the recipes in this article, you'll discover that the method is dead simple. You don't need a super high-powered wok burner; you don't even need a wok. And even though Thai noodle dishes in restaurants often include hard-to-find ingredients like bamboo shoots or Thai basil, you won't need them for these recipes. Your local supermarket should have everything you need.



1 Submerge wide (pad thai) rice noodles in a bowl of very warm (110°F) water and soak until they're pliable but still rather firm, about 30 minutes. Drain in a colander (no need to pat dry).



2 After adding minced garlic to the pan, give a quick stir and then immediately stir in shrimp or meat. The garlic will quickly turn golden and aromatic—don't delay or you risk turning it bitter and black.



3 Condiments like fish sauce and soy sauce go in next. Also add any ingredients that need a few minutes to soften.



Stir-Fries



4 Stir in the drained noodles toward the end. They only need a minute or two over the heat to finish cooking. They should be tender, silky, and slippery (but not mushy).

Stir-Fried Noodles with Shrimp, Chiles & Lime

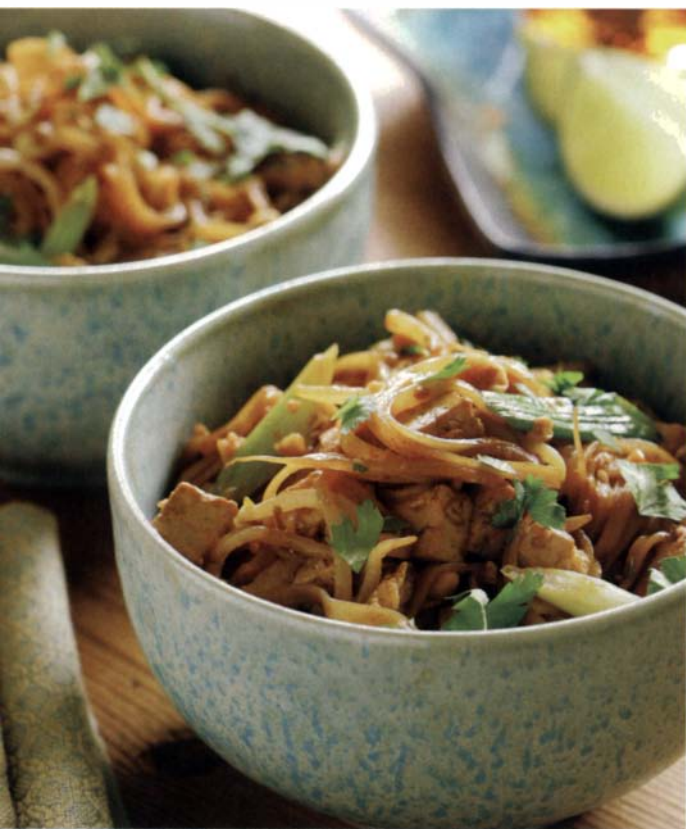
Serves two.

- 3 ounces dried wide (pad thai) rice noodles**
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce**
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar**
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce**
- 1 teaspoon hoisin sauce**
- 1 teaspoon chile-garlic sauce (such as Lee Kum Kee brand)**
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil**
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic**
- 6 ounces medium shrimp (51 to 60 per pound), peeled and deveined (to yield 1 cup)**
- 1 4-ounce can fire-roasted whole green chiles (such as Ortega brand), drained and sliced into long, very thin slivers (to yield ½ cup)**
- 1½ cups bean sprouts (see p. 66)**
- 2 tablespoons crushed unsalted roasted peanuts**
- ⅓ cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro**
- 10 mint leaves, torn into small pieces**
- 1 lime, cut into wedges for serving**

Soak the dried rice noodles as directed in the first photo on the facing page. Meanwhile, prep the rest of the ingredients.

In a small bowl, combine the fish sauce, sugar, soy sauce, hoisin sauce, and chile-garlic sauce.

Once the noodles are drained, heat the oil in a large (12-inch) skillet or stir-fry pan over high heat until very hot. Add the garlic, stir, and immediately add the shrimp. Stir-fry until the shrimp turn pink and firm, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the fish sauce mixture. Stir to mix for about 20 seconds, then add the chile slivers and the noodles. Stir-fry until the noodles are tender and the liquid is absorbed, 1 to 2 minutes. If the noodles are too firm, add 1 tablespoon of water and cook another minute. Add the bean sprouts and stir-fry until they're slightly limp, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to a serving platter or individual plates, and garnish with the peanuts, cilantro, and mint. Serve immediately, with lime wedges on the side.



Stir-Fried Noodles with Chicken, Mushrooms & Green Beans

Serves two.

4 ounces wide (pad thai) rice noodles
4 ounces green beans, cut on the diagonal into ¼-inch-thick slices (to yield 1 cup)
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1 boneless, skinless chicken breast half (6 to 7 ounces), cut in half lengthwise and then cut crosswise into ¼-inch slices (to yield ¾ cup)
½ teaspoon kosher salt
2 tablespoons fish sauce
1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
1 teaspoon minced red or green serrano chile
2 ounces white or cremini mushrooms, thinly sliced (to yield 1 cup)

1 tablespoon (or more) chicken broth or water, if needed
¼ cup roughly chopped fresh basil
2 tablespoons roughly chopped fresh mint leaves
1 lime, cut into wedges for serving

Soak the dried rice noodles as directed in the first photo on p. 58. Meanwhile, prep the rest of the ingredients.

Bring a small pot of salted water to a boil. Add the green beans and blanch until crisp-tender, 30 to 60 seconds. Drain in a colander and run under cold water to stop the cooking.

Once the noodles are drained, heat the oil in a large (12-inch) skillet or stir-fry pan over high

Stir-Fried Noodles with Tofu, Scallions & Peanuts

Serves two.

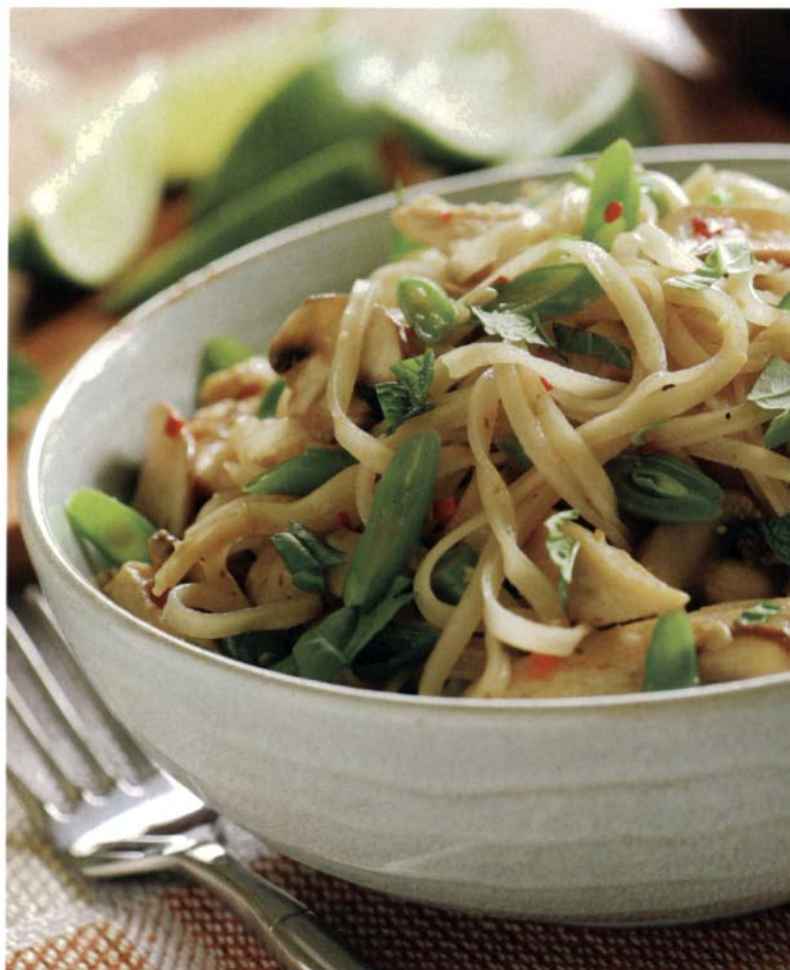
4 ounces dried wide (pad thai) rice noodles
2 tablespoons soy sauce
2 tablespoons unsulphured molasses
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
1 tablespoon ketchup
1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
½ teaspoon kosher salt
⅛ teaspoon cayenne
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 tablespoon minced garlic
8 ounces extra-firm tofu, drained thoroughly and sliced into ½-inch cubes (to yield 1½ cups)
1½ cups bean sprouts (see p. 66)
2 scallions, trimmed and sliced diagonally into 1-inch lengths
1 large egg
2 tablespoons crushed unsalted roasted peanuts
3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
1 lime, cut into wedges for serving

Soak the dried rice noodles as directed in the first photo on p. 58. Meanwhile, prep the rest of the ingredients.

In a small bowl, whisk together the soy sauce, molasses, rice vinegar, ketchup, ginger, salt, and cayenne.

Once the noodles are drained, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large (12-inch) skillet or stir-fry pan over high heat until very hot. Add the garlic, stir, and then immediately add the soy sauce-molasses mixture. When the mixture is bubbling, add the tofu. Stir briefly to combine. Add the noodles and cook, stirring and tossing, until the noodles are tender and the liquid is absorbed, 1 to 2 minutes. If the noodles aren't tender and the liquid is gone, add 1 or 2 tablespoons of water. Add the bean sprouts and scallions and cook, stirring gently, until the bean sprouts begin to turn limp, about 1 minute.

Push the noodles to one side of the skillet and add the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil. Crack the egg into the oil. Scramble the egg lightly until it is almost but not completely cooked, breaking it up as you go, about 30 seconds. Fold the noodles back over the egg, add the peanuts, and stir-fry, stirring gently, until the egg is completely cooked. Sprinkle with the cilantro, and serve immediately with the lime wedges on the side.



heat until very hot. Add the garlic, stir, and immediately add the chicken. Season with the salt and stir-fry until the chicken is partially cooked, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the fish sauce, ginger, sugar, and chile and stir to combine. Add the mushrooms and stir-fry until they're limp, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the blanched green beans and noodles and stir-fry until the noodles are tender, about 1 minute. If they're too firm, add 1 tablespoon of broth or water and stir-fry until the liquid is absorbed and the noodles are tender, about 1 minute. Transfer to a platter or plates, and garnish with the basil and mint. Serve immediately, with lime wedges on the side.



Su-Mei Yu is the author of Cracking the Coconut and Asian Grilling. Her next cookbook is due out in 2007. ♦

A basic Asian pantry for fast noodle stir-fries

You don't need to stock up on exotic ingredients to make these dishes. With the noodles and a few condiments in your pantry, you're halfway there.

RICE NOODLES.

The recipes here call for wide rice noodles, often labeled pad thai noodles or rice sticks (for sources, see p. 76); they resemble linguine or fettuccine. They come in various-size packages; if you don't have a scale, divide the package by eye to get the amount needed. Figure that 4 ounces of wide noodles yields about 2 cups when cooked, enough for two people.



FISH SAUCE.

Good fish sauce should be the color of tea and have a slightly briny taste. Refrigerated, it keeps for months; when it turns dark or crystallizes, discard it.



HOISIN SAUCE.

This dark, thick, sweet sauce consists of soy beans, salt, sugar, and flour. At room temperature, it lasts forever.



SOY SAUCE.

I like Chinese soy sauce for these dishes, but you can use your own favorite. Soy sauce lasts indefinitely in the refrigerator.



RICE VINEGAR.

Use unseasoned rice vinegar, which has a sharp, clean taste. It keeps indefinitely.



CHILE-GARLIC SAUCE.

These vary in strength, so you may want to adjust the amount accordingly.

Tiramisù, the ultimate “pick-me-up”

BY LAURA GIANNATEMPO

Great espresso and delicate ladyfingers are the secrets to this luscious Italian dessert





Author Laura Giannatempo uses a stovetop “moka” pot to make a large batch of espresso for tiramisù. Double-strength drip coffee made with espresso roast works well, too.

Choose the right type of ladyfingers



Most people think of apple pie or brownies as the ultimate comfort dessert. Not me. When it comes to sweets, I dream of tiramisù. That's what my mother whipped up for a quick and tasty treat during my Italian childhood, and it's what I always wanted on my birthday instead of a fancy frosted cake. (And I still do, whenever I go back to visit.)

Tiramisù has gone through countless reinterpretations by chefs and cookbook authors—some of which are hardly reminiscent of the original. So let's set the record straight: Authentic tiramisù as I know it is made with flaky, cookie-like ladyfingers briefly soaked in espresso and layered with a silky smooth mascarpone cream. My mother makes a delicious one with a soft, fluffy texture and a lip-smacking bittersweet kick that's hard to beat. And because it calls for packaged ladyfingers (like most Italian tiramisùs), it's simple and relatively speedy to make. After hunting far and wide for a tiramisù as good as hers, I finally gave up and phoned Mom for the recipe.

It starts with a strong brew

With tiramisù's high-energy mix of sugar, eggs, and caffeine-rich espresso coffee, it's no wonder it means “pick-me-up.” And indeed great tiramisù starts with really good

espresso—a lot of it. The stronger and better tasting your coffee is, the better your tiramisù will be. My mother and I make coffee in a stovetop espresso pot, called a “caffettiera moka” in Italy (see Equipment, p. 28). Of course, if you have a coffee shop-style espresso machine, go ahead and use it—although it may take a while to collect 5 cups of coffee, shot after shot!

If you don't have an espresso machine, use a drip coffee maker and brew double-strength coffee using espresso roast. If you can't find espresso roast, the Italian brands of ground coffee that you find in grocery stores, such as Illy or Lavazza, work fine. Although it may be tempting, stay away from instant espresso powder. Reconstituted, it has no body and, with its unpleasant burnt-wood tang, it hardly tastes like espresso.

The trickiest thing when making tiramisù is knowing how long to soak the ladyfingers in coffee. Usually it's only a few seconds, but there is so much textural variation from brand to brand that it's impossible to give a surefire soaking time. My mother always uses the same brand, so she knows exactly when to take her ladyfingers out of the coffee before they get too soggy. And you'll know too, after you get acquainted with a brand of ladyfingers you like (see sidebar at right).

What will make or break your tiramisù is texture: The ladyfingers have to be just barely soaked through with coffee, moist but not soggy and falling apart. When testing the recipe, we found that brand and type of ladyfinger make a big difference.

You'll find two main types in grocery stores: packaged, cookie-style ladyfingers (usually imported from Italy) and soft, spongy ladyfingers commonly sold in clear packages in the bakery section of most

supermarkets. In my experience, the latter won't do the trick. They get too soggy too fast, resulting in a sopping mess. Use the cookie-style ladyfingers instead.

We liked Balocco, Bonomi, and Elledi brands, which take only 1 to 3 seconds to soak through. Real Torino brand also worked, but it has a slightly denser texture and needs significantly more soaking time (10 to 12 seconds). For sources, see *Where to Buy It*, p. 76.

Assembling tiramisù: Layer coffee-dipped ladyfingers and mascarpone cream



1 Break one ladyfinger after you've dipped it in the cooled coffee to check that the coffee has penetrated only halfway through, leaving the core dry. The outside will be quite soft, but the inside should be firm.



2 Evenly spread half the mascarpone cream with a spatula over a tight layer of ladyfingers arranged in a 9x13-inch baking dish.



3 Use a fine-mesh sieve to finish off the tiramisù with a generous dusting of cocoa powder just before serving.

Tiramisù

Serves ten to twelve.

This recipe calls for uncooked eggs, so keep the tiramisù refrigerated and serve it within 48 hours.

5 cups hot brewed espresso (or double-strength drip coffee made with espresso roast)

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar

2 tablespoons rum, or more to taste (optional)

4 large eggs, separated*

16 ounces (2 cups) mascarpone cheese

About 46 ladyfingers or savoiardi cookies, preferably Balocco, Bonomi, or Elledi brands (see sidebar, p. 63)

2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder or 1 to 2 ounces bittersweet chocolate

Pour the coffee in a large bowl and add 2 tablespoons of the

sugar while it's still hot. Stir well and let it cool to room temperature. Add the rum, if using.

Combine the egg yolks and the remaining 1 cup sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Beat on medium-high speed until the yolks are pale yellow and fluffy, about 5 minutes. (The mixture will be fairly thick at first.) Add the mascarpone and beat until it's fully incorporated into a smooth cream, 2 to 3 minutes more. Transfer to a large bowl.

Thoroughly wash and dry the stand mixer bowl and whisk. Put the egg whites in the bowl, and whip on medium-high speed until they form medium-stiff peaks when you lift the beaters (the tips should curl over onto themselves just a little). With a rubber spatula, fold about one-quarter of the beaten whites into the mascarpone cream to lighten it.

Then gently fold in the remaining whites, taking care not to deflate them. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.

Submerge one ladyfinger in the cooled coffee until the coffee penetrates about halfway through, leaving the core dry (break it to check). This can take from 1 to 12 seconds, depending on the type of ladyfinger (see sidebar, p. 63). You don't want the ladyfinger to get completely soaked or it'll become soggy and fall apart. You should be able to feel that the outside is soft, but the inside is still firm.

Once you've determined the correct soaking time, submerge each ladyfinger individually, gently shake out excess coffee, and immediately set it in a 9x13-inch baking dish; continue until you have one tight layer that covers the bottom of the dish. (You may need to break a few ladyfingers

to fit in snugly.) Spread one-half of the mascarpone cream evenly on top of the ladyfingers.

Repeat the soaking procedure with the remaining ladyfingers to create a second snug layer, arranging them on top of the mascarpone cream as you did for the first layer. Spread the rest of the mascarpone cream evenly on top. Cover the dish with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Before serving, sift the cocoa powder or finely grate the chocolate over the top to evenly cover.

*If the uncooked eggs in this dish are a concern, use pasteurized eggs.

Laura Giannatempo is an assistant editor for Fine Cooking. ♦



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BY JENNIFER ARMENTROUT



BARTENDER'S WEDGE: Trim a little off each end of the fruit, then halve it lengthwise. Using a V-shaped cut, notch out the lengthwise-running core of the fruit. Cut it lengthwise into wedges.



CLASSIC SLICE: Cut the fruit in half crosswise. Cut the halves crosswise into wedges.

Two techniques for prettier citrus wedges

When a recipe calls for garnishing a dish with lime or lemon wedges, most people just cut the fruit into lengthwise wedges and don't give it a second thought. But the bright, sparkling color of a lemon or lime wedge is an eye-catcher, and so if presentation is important to you, try one of the prep methods at left.

With bean sprouts, freshness is key

Mung bean sprouts, which are used in the rice noodle stir-fries on pp. 59–60, are extremely perishable, so you need to pay extra attention when you're buying or storing them. Here are some tips:

How to buy: Look for sprouts that have crispy, white roots with yellow and light green leaves. Darkening roots, sliminess, and a musty odor are all signs that sprouts may be over the hill. The USDA recommends that sprouts be stored at 32°F, which is colder than most grocery store produce department shelves. If the sprouts on display don't look very fresh, ask if there are more in the back cooler. Don't buy sprouts too far in advance because they'll fade after a couple of days.



How to store: If not using the sprouts that day, rinse them in a colander under cold water, transfer them to a zip-top plastic bag lined with paper towels, and refrigerate in the vegetable bin. If you need to keep them longer than a couple of days, try storing them submerged in a covered container of ice water in the refrigerator, changing the water and adding more ice daily. This can prolong their life for up to 5 days.

Easy ways to use up sprouts: Pile them on a sandwich or in a wrap—they add a great juicy crunch and are especially tasty with avocado. Toss them into an Asian-style slaw made with Napa cabbage, carrot, scallion, chopped peanuts, sliced jalapeño, mint, cilantro, lime juice, and peanut oil. Sprouts also add a nice crunch to soups and go well in any stir-fry; just don't cook them for more than a few minutes or they'll get soggy.

—Allison Ehri,
test kitchen associate

Making preserved lemons? Sterilize the jar first

When it comes to preserving foods, lemons are one of the least risky items to preserve because the copious amounts of salt and acidic lemon juice involved in the process don't make a good environment for bacteria to thrive. That said, if you're making the Preserved

Lemons on p. 57, it's nevertheless good practice to start off with a sterilized jar, just to be on the safe side.

To sterilize a canning jar, place it on a rack in a tall pot. Add enough hot water to cover by at least 1 inch and then bring to a boil over high heat. If you live at an altitude of less than 1,000 feet above sea level, boil for 10 minutes. For higher elevations, add 1 minute for each additional 1,000 feet. Using either jar-lifter tongs or regular tongs wrapped in rubber bands for extra grip, carefully remove and drain the jar. Don't boil any rubber gaskets or lids with built-in gaskets; wash them in hot, soapy water instead.

You may also be able to use your dishwasher to sterilize the jar if the dishwasher has a special sterilizing cycle. Consult your owner's manual for details.



How to straighten your bacon

I love really crunchy bacon, so sometimes I weight it down as it cooks to keep the edges from curling up and staying soft. This little trick works especially well for bacon that will be crumbled. It means there's another pot to wash, but to me, that's a fair price to pay for bacon that is perfectly flat and crisp all over. Here's how to do it:

Place your bacon in a large sauté pan, being careful not to crowd the pan. Place a pot that's slightly narrower than the bottom of the sauté pan on top of the bacon to weight it down and keep it flat. Cook the weighted bacon over medium heat so the fat renders slowly and completely. After the bacon is browned on one side, about 2 to 3 minutes, carefully lift the pot (it'll drip), flip the bacon, and replace the pot. Cook the bacon on the other side until it's completely browned and crisp, 2 to 3 more minutes.

—Allison Ehri, test kitchen associate



*Clockwise from top right:
cloves, Sichuan peppercorns,
star anise, fennel seed, cinnamon sticks.*

For the best flavor, make your own Chinese five-spice powder

The Asian-Glazed Braised Short Ribs on p. 46 get much of their deep, rich flavor from Chinese five-spice powder, a warm and fragrant spice blend typically composed of star anise, cloves, fennel seed, cinnamon, and Sichuan peppercorns (these aromatic, mildly fruity and peppery reddish-brown dried berries are unrelated to black or white peppercorns). Licorice root and ginger may also be components of five-spice powder. Some supermarkets carry five-spice powder—it's part of McCormick's Gourmet Blends collection—and you can easily find it in Asian markets. You can also grind your own from whole spices, although some of the ingredients may be just as hard to find as the blend itself. The advantage to making your own is that, like all freshly ground spices, it'll be more potent than its preground counterpart. For a mail-order source for five-spice powder and its components, see Where to Buy It on p. 76.

Chinese Five-Spice Powder

Makes about 1/4 cup.

4 whole star anise pods
3 2½-inch cinnamon sticks
1 tablespoon whole cloves
1 tablespoon fennel seed
1 tablespoon Sichuan peppercorns

Combine all the ingredients in a spice grinder. Pulse until finely ground. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dark place for up to 6 months.

technique class

Add color & crunch with crispy garnishes

Years of restaurant work have taught me that the finishing touches are what make a dish truly special. When I cook at home, I usually finish dishes simply with a sprinkling of fresh herbs, but when I want to put an exclamation point on a dish, I'll top it with a crisp garnish, like fried shallot rings or baked fingerling potato crisps. Garnishes like these add a wonderful texture and flavor to the dish, and they give it a dressy look. Here's how to add a little restaurant drama to your own cooking.

—Tony Rosenfeld, contributing editor



Beet Crisps



Fingerling Potato Crisps



Apple Crisps



Shiitake Crisps

Baking produces crisps with lovely ruffled edges.

Garnish	Amount (for 3–4 servings)	How to prepare for baking	Temperature/ baking time	Pair with...
Beet Crisps	1 medium beet	Scrub, trim ends (don't peel), slice $\frac{1}{16}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick, and toss with canola oil and kosher salt to coat lightly.	300°F 30 to 40 minutes	Salads, chicken or pork stews or braises
Fingerling Potato Crisps	2 small fingerlings	Scrub (don't peel), slice $\frac{1}{16}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick, and toss with canola oil and kosher salt to coat lightly.	350°F 20 to 25 minutes	Stews or braises or as a base for canapés (like a swatch of smoked salmon and a dab of crème fraîche on top of a crisp)
Apple Crisps	1 medium Granny Smith apple	Slice $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick (don't peel or core but do discard seeds), and toss with canola oil and light brown sugar to coat lightly.	250°F 45 to 60 minutes	Apple pie, ice cream, cake, pork stews
Shiitake Crisps (a.k.a. "shiitake bacon"—you must try it to believe it)	15 to 20 medium-large shiitakes	Remove stems, slice caps $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick, and toss with canola oil and kosher salt to coat lightly.	350°F 20 to 25 minutes	Salads, baked potatoes, pizza, Asian braises, stews, stir-fries

Baking Method

Heat the oven to the appropriate temperature. Line a heavy-duty baking sheet with a Silpat (see *Where to Buy It*, p. 76) or parchment.

Spread the prepared garnish

in a single layer on the baking sheet. Use a second sheet if necessary.

Bake until the garnish browns and crisps (see the chart above for approximate times). Some pieces may brown faster than others so remove them from the

oven as they're done, leaving the others in to finish browning. Apples won't fully crisp until cool.

Let cool to room temperature, and then store in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

Frying gives jaunty curves & an extra-crisp texture.

Garnish	Amount (for 3–4 servings)	How to prepare for frying	Pair with...
Fried Sage & Parsley Leaves (Flat or curly)	10 to 12 leaves	Stem, rinse, and pat dry.	Pastas and grilled or roasted meats, risotto
Frizzled Leeks	1 medium leek	Trim and discard dark green tops. Thinly slice white and light green parts into 3-inch-long julienne strips. Rinse in a bowl of water to remove grit, drain, and pat dry.	Sautéed or roast pork, chicken, or beef tenderloin, braised short ribs
Fried Parsnip & Carrot Strips	2 medium carrots and 2 medium parsnips	Peel and then (using the peeler), shave into thin strips. Fry carrots and parsnips separately.	Braises and stews, especially those that have root vegetables like carrots or parsnips as a base
Fried Shallot Rings	3 to 4 medium shallots	Peel, thinly slice crosswise, separate slices into rings, dredge in flour, and shake off excess.	Thai or Indian curries, baked potatoes, braises, stews

Frying Method

Choose a small (2-quart) saucepan, preferably with tall sides. Add enough neutral-flavored oil, like peanut, vegetable, or canola, to reach a depth of about 1 inch. You'll need about 2 cups of oil for a 6½-inch-wide pan. Attach a candy thermometer to the side of the saucepan.

Heat the oil over medium-high heat until it's between 325° and

350°F. Reduce the heat to medium or medium-low to hold the oil in this temperature range.

Add a small handful of the prepared garnish to the oil. (Caution: the oil will bubble up immediately, especially with sage and parsley leaves. Always fry in small batches to avoid overcrowding the pan and to prevent boil-overs.)

Fry the garnish, stirring often with a metal slotted spoon, until

the oil is barely bubbling and the garnish is light golden brown, 1 to 3 minutes. (The oil temperature will drop when you add the garnish; let it return to the starting temperature before frying the next batch.)

Lift the garnish from the oil using the slotted spoon, tap against the side of the pan to drain off excess oil, and transfer to a large plate or a baking sheet lined with a couple of layers of paper towel. Gently shake on the paper towel and then slide the garnishes onto the paper towel below it, discarding the oil-soaked top layer.

Sprinkle lightly with kosher salt while still hot.

Let cool to room temperature. If not using right away, store in a sealed container. Fried garnishes can be stored for a few days, but they'll taste their best when made no more than 4 hours ahead.



Fried Sage & Parsley Leaves



Fried Parsnip & Carrot Strips



Frizzled Leeks



Fried Shallot Rings



Espresso: It's not just strong coffee



Espresso is more than just strong, dark coffee. Real espresso, which is key to making the Tiramisù on p. 64, is rich, creamy, and full-bodied, with an intensely deep flavor.

It all begins with the right coffee beans and proper roasting. Typically, espresso is made with a carefully selected blend of arabica coffee beans from different regions (arabica and robusta are the only two varieties of coffee bean). The beans are roasted in machines that bring them to progressively higher temperatures (usually not more than 450°F) to create the right balance of acidity and bitterness. True espresso roast is not as bitter or as darkly roasted as many people think. It

really only ranks medium to dark on the coffee-roasting continuum—French roasts are actually much darker.

While using the right coffee is the first step to great espresso, using the right grind and brewing method is just as important. Espresso is traditionally made with a machine that heats the water to an exact temperature and forces it at a precise pressure through the beans, which are finely ground and carefully tamped to prevent water from moving through them too quickly. The entire process is truly “express”—only 25 to 30 seconds from start to finish. (See p. 63 to learn about making espresso on the stovetop with a moka pot.)

—Laura Giannatempo, assistant editor

culinary dictionary

pincer (PIN-sehr) *v.*

In her recipes for Red Wine Marinated Braised Short Ribs (p. 43) and Short Rib Ragù (p. 45), Molly Stevens briefly cooks the tomato paste in the recipes before adding any liquid. This classic technique—known by the French culinary term *pincer*—concentrates the flavor of the tomato paste and caramelizes it a bit. Usually used when making brown stocks or sauces and braised or stewed dishes, it takes just a few extra minutes to do and has a big, rich flavor payoff in the end.

In culinary school, I heard the term most often used in reference to tomato paste, but it actually also applies to browning in general, whether it's meat, bones, or vegetables.

Buy shrimp by the count, not the size

The next time you buy shrimp, take a closer look at the label and you'll notice a set of numbers divided by a slash, like this: 21/25. This number, called the “count,” tells you the size of the shrimp. The count refers to the number of individual shrimp in 1 pound. So for instance, when you buy 1 pound of 21/25 count shrimp, you can expect to get 21 to 25 shrimp. The smaller the numbers, the bigger the shrimp. Sometimes on big shrimp you'll see a count that looks like this: U/15 or U/10. This means there are “under 15” or “under 10” shrimp per pound.

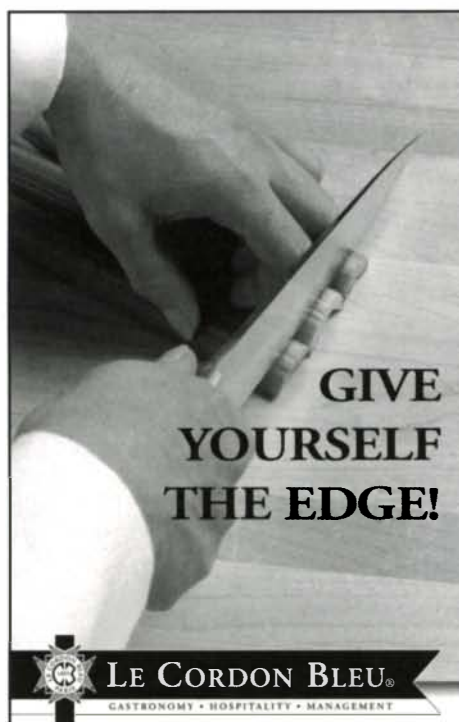
When buying shrimp, the main advantage to using the count is that it's a reliable, consistent measure. Adjectives that describe the size, like “jumbo” or “large,” aren't used consistently. It's not uncommon to find a particular count—say 51/60's—labeled as “medium” in one store while another store just down the road calls them “small.”

Another potential advantage to ordering shrimp by the count is that you gain instant credibility with the fish seller.

Using the count identifies you as someone “in the know” about seafood, and the next time you approach the counter, he or she might be more inclined to point you to the best choices in the display case or maybe even offer you some of the primo tuna they have stashed in the back cooler for their most discerning customers.



Shrimp shown actual size.



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Semisweet chocolate chips

When baking season is in full swing, semisweet chocolate chips become a pantry staple we reach for frequently to make cookies, muffins, and other sweet treats. But if you thought all chocolate chips were created equal, think again. When *Fine Cooking* staffers conducted a blind tasting of six widely available brands of semisweet chocolate chips, we were surprised to find a remarkable variety of flavors, textures, and even shapes among them. We tasted all the chocolate chips straight; we were looking for chips with a smooth, creamy texture and a full, chocolatey flavor not overwhelmed by sweetness. We found that Guittard chips best matched these qualities, followed closely by Nestlé Toll House.

—Laura Giannatempo, assistant editor



Top Pick

GUITTARD

\$2.29 (12 ounces)

These plump, good-looking chips seemed to best deliver the full chocolate flavor one might expect from semisweet chocolate chips, with just the right balance of sweetness and bitter tones and a pleasant “malty” edge. Their texture was particularly smooth and creamy with a crunchy snap, a satisfying chew, and an even melt.

Runners-up Chocolate chips numbered in order of preference; prices will vary.



2

NESTLÉ TOLL HOUSE

\$2.34 (12 ounces)

A solid, familiar chocolate flavor with a pleasant floral zing made these chocolate chips a favorite among several tasters. Some, however, found them a bit on the sweet side. Overall, their mouthfeel was pleasantly smooth.



3

TROPICAL SOURCE

\$3.49 (10 ounces)

The surprising coffee bean flavor and dark, smoky finish of these chips set them apart from the rest of the bunch. They're sweetened with evaporated cane juice rather than sugar, which may explain why a few tasters detected a “marshmallow-like” flavor. Their texture was quite smooth with only hints of grittiness.



4

GHIRARDELLI

\$3.69 (11.5 ounces)

These attractive, curvy chips had an understated chocolate flavor and an oddly spicy, tobacco-like aftertaste. While some panelists appreciated their balance of sweetness and dark chocolate flavors, quite a few found them too sweet. Everyone agreed that their texture was pleasantly creamy and “melty.”



5

BAKER'S CHOCOLATE CHUNKS

\$3.29 (12 ounces)

Baker's no longer has a line of chocolate chips. Instead, you can find their semisweet chocolate chunks. The chunks, which resemble little chocolate tiles, were a bit waxy with an unappealing powdery quality. Their flavor also failed to impress: too sweet with an odd “fermented” aftertaste.



6

HERSHEY'S

\$2.99 (12 ounces)

These chocolate chips ranked consistently low across the panel. Overly sweet with a sharp, artificial aftertaste one taster called “medicinal,” they were markedly waxy with an unpleasant dusty texture.

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Clever Kitchen Tips & Why They Work

The hidden science behind some of our favorite readers' tips

We've published hundreds of clever readers' tips over the years, and every so often, we encounter one that makes us wonder, why does it work? We figured there must be a scientific explanation; after all, science lurks beneath everything we cooks do in the kitchen. So we rounded up some tips we'd been wondering about and turned them over to chemist and food science writer **Robert L. Wolke**, author of the two-book series *What Einstein Told His Cook*, for an explanation. Here's what he has to say about the science behind the tips.



reader's tip:

Fighting onion tears

After crying my way through all of those no-tears tricks for cutting onions, such as breathing only through my mouth or running cold water into the sink while chopping, my husband suggested goggles. I look a little silly in my Speedo swim goggles, but I wear them from the first slice of onion to the last and never shed a tear.

—Gretchen Allison, Duck Soup Inn, FC#8

why it works: Ask almost any cook and you'll hear his or her pet strategy for preventing tears when cutting onions. "Cut them under water," some will say, leaving open the question of whether the onions or the cook, or both, are to be submerged. Others may say, "Cut off the root end last," as if the onion will know the difference and behave accordingly. And then there's the last-line-of-defense school: Let the irritating gas spread at will, but protect the eyes and nose with a skin-diving mask—a technique I have used with success. (A Speedo bathing suit is not required.)

But before I tell you another, less clumsy, defensive measure, let me explain why onions make us cry.

The tear-producing gas is a chemical called (among other names) thiopropanal sulfoxide. It doesn't exist in whole, intact onions. Instead, it forms at the time of cutting, when an enzyme (alliinase) and certain other chemicals (sulfoxides) escape from the broken cells and react with one another in the air to form the thiopropanal sulfoxide vapor. When this vapor reaches the eyes, it dissolves in our always-present film of tears. This irritation stimulates the tear glands to try to wash the offending substance away.

All right, then, can anything eliminate or at least reduce the tears? Try this: Refrigerate your onion for an hour or two before you cut it. All chemical reactions, including the ones that produce onion tear gas, slow down at lower temperatures. If the onion is cold, there will be less gas and fewer tears.

But if you prefer to stick with some other pet method, that's fine, too. If it works for you, go for it.

reader's tip:

A better way to store herbs

When I get home from the store, I unwrap any fresh herbs, put the stems in a tall mug of water, cover the top loosely with a plastic bag, and put the whole "bouquet" in the fridge. I find the herbs stay fresh much longer when stored this way—plus they're in plain sight, so I'm much more likely to use them.

—Patricia A. Janney,

Kingston, New York, FC#6

why it works: As any elated recipient of a floral bouquet knows, the best way to sustain the flowers—and the sentiment behind them—is to immerse the tips of their stems in water. The same is true for fresh herbs.

Many flowering plants and herbs (the so-called vascular plants) have bundles of elongated structures called xylem and phloem running up their stems to carry water and nutrients to the plants' upper regions. When you put the stems of fresh herbs into water, the water rises through these tubes into the leaves and keeps them firm. Placing the herb bouquet in the refrigera-

tor slows decay, so the herbs will stay fresh for as long as two weeks. Replace the water every couple of days so that bacteria and molds don't take up residence in it.



reader's tip:

Make your own buttermilk

When I need buttermilk for a recipe, I make my own by adding 1 tablespoon vinegar or lemon juice to 1 cup room-temperature whole milk and letting it stand for 5 minutes.

—Dale Conoscenti,
Montpelier, Vermont, FC#38

why it works: In a pinch, this trick will work, but, as I'll explain, it's not always the best course of action. Adding an acid like vinegar (acetic acid) or lemon juice (citric acid) to milk curdles the proteins and makes the milk taste sour. But soured milk and buttermilk aren't the same thing. Real buttermilk is cultured by adding live lactobacillus to milk. These bacteria feed on lactose, a milk sugar, and produce lactic acid, which partially coagulates and thickens the milk and also gives it a distinctive, tangy flavor. Milk that's been soured with vinegar or lemon juice, however, tastes like, well, vinegar or lemon juice.

You can easily substitute soured milk for buttermilk in a recipe where the buttermilk's primary function is a chemical one: for example, in a cake batter where the buttermilk is the acid that reacts with the baking soda and creates the carbon dioxide gas that helps the cake rise. But in recipes for buttermilk biscuits or pancakes or salad dressing—that is, any recipe where buttermilk's unique lactic-acid flavor and consistency is key—only the real thing will do.



reader's tip:

Thaw food quickly without gimmicks

You can thaw frozen foods quickly with a heavy aluminum frying pan. Fill the pan with hot water and wait a minute or two for the pan to warm. Pour out the water and set the frozen food in the pan. When the pan cools, repeat the heating process with hot water and turn the food over to thaw it from the other side. Repeat this process until the food is thawed. The method works just as well as those expensive thawing trays advertised on television.

—Robert Ponsi, Eustis, Florida, FC#16

why it works: This is a great tip, and people are often astounded at how well it works. But heating the pan with hot water isn't even necessary. You can thaw frozen food quickly simply by placing it on a heavy metal surface at room temperature. This works because metals very efficiently conduct heat from the surrounding air into the food. The heavier the pan, the more heat it can conduct, and the faster the food will defrost.

Copper and aluminum are the best heat conductors, but if a solid copper or heavy aluminum pan isn't handy, a heavy stainless-steel pan with a thick copper or aluminum core will work very well. A cast-iron pan would be the next best option. A solid stainless-steel pan isn't a great choice because stainless steel doesn't

conduct heat as well as the other metals. And a nonstick pan is even worse because its Teflon lining is a heat insulator—but there's nothing to prevent you from using it upside down.

reader's tip:

Soften brown sugar in the microwave

When I need to soften rock-hard brown sugar in a hurry, I just zap it—box and all—in the microwave. After a few seconds, the brown sugar is warm, soft, and ready to use.

—Doris J. Davlin,
Pauma Valley, California, FC#12

why it works: This is a classic tip—at least since microwaves invaded our kitchens. Brown sugar consists of sugar grains, pretty much like the granulated sugar in your sugar bowl, but with the addition of a small amount of molasses. When exposed to air, the molasses dries and hardens, cementing the grains together into a block of sweet concrete. Heat from the microwaves softens the molasses cement long enough for you to measure out the sugar, but it will harden again as it cools.

A more permanent fix is to restore the brown sugar's lost moisture by sealing it in an airtight container along with a wedge of apple or a piece of dampened paper towel (keep a sheet of plastic wrap or aluminum foil between the towel or apple and the sugar). The molasses will soften over a period of several days as moisture from the fruit or damp paper raises the humidity in the container.

Robert L. Wolke, professor emeritus of chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh, writes the award-winning syndicated Food 101 column for The Washington Post. He is the author of several books, the latest of which is What Einstein Told His Cook 2: Further Adventures in Kitchen Science. ♦



FROM THE BACK COVER

For more information about the Abbey of Regina Laudis, visit Abbeyofreginalaudis.com. The cheeses are not available by mail-order but can be purchased in person at the abbey's shop in Bethlehem, Connecticut. Call in advance to check availability at 203-266-7727.

Chicken & Potatoes, p. 34

For the roasted chicken and potato recipes, an 11x17-inch heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet, also called a half sheet pan, is ideal. To order one, visit Bakerscatalogue.com (800-827-6836), where the pans sell for \$17.95.

Winter Greens Gratin, p. 39

To make mini versions of the gratins with greens (like the ones on p. 41), we used Apilco round porcelain 5-inch eared dishes, available at Bridgekitchenware.com (212-688-4220) for \$11.99 each.



Tiramisù, p. 62

Laura Giannatempo recommends packaged, cookie-style ladyfingers (not the soft, spongy ones you find in the bakery section of your supermarket). They're available in some supermarkets, but you can also order them from Igourmet.com (Bonomi brand) or Amazon.com (Elledi and Bonomi brands). For stovetop espresso makers (Bialetti makes good ones), visit Laprimashops.com. Go for a large model if you're using it to



make tiramisù—a 12-cup version sells for \$40.99 (the 12 cups refer to small espresso shots, not 8-ounce measuring cups). If you're just looking to make espresso for drinking, though, a smaller model will do just fine.

Lemons as the Star, p. 52

To make and store preserved lemons, Jennifer McLagan recommends quart-size wide-mouthed Mason jars, which you can find at Polsteins.com (866-846-5366); packs of 12 jars sell for \$13.99. To zest lemons, try a Microplane grater/zester (40000 Series), \$11.95 at Cutleryandmore.com.

Muffins, p. 48

Cookswares.com (800-915-9788) sells several brands of 12-cup muffin pans starting at \$16. To scoop muffin batter into the pans, Joanne Chang uses two spoons or a #20 ice cream scoop with a "sweeper" that pushes the batter out. To find a similar scoop, go to

Instawares.com (800-892-3622) and search for a #20 food disher (\$7.46).

Rice Noodle Stir-Fries, p. 58

Ingredients for the rice noodle stir-fries are available in most supermarkets, but if you want to buy wide rice (pad thai) noodles, fish sauce, hoisin sauce, soy sauce, chili garlic sauce (search for chili garlic sauce), and rice vinegar online, visit Ethnicgrocer.com.

From Our Test Kitchen, p. 66

Look for Silpat silicone baking mats at Surlatable.com (800-243-0852), which sells several sizes; prices start at \$12.95. To mail-order Sichuan peppercorns (3.5 ounces for \$2.09), star anise (3 ounces for \$1.89), and five-spice powder (4 ounces for \$1.49), visit Orientalpantry.com (978-264-4576).



Equipment, p. 26

BonJour's Professional Chef's Torch is \$34.95 at kitchen-universe.com (800-481-6679). Messermeister's Chefblade Food Torch is \$39.99 at cookswares.com (800-915-9788).

Convection ovens

True convection ranges and wall ovens (p. 30) range in price from about \$1,150 to \$9,000. This alphabetical list of manufacturers is a good place to start your research.

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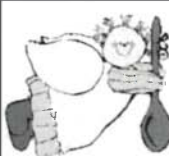
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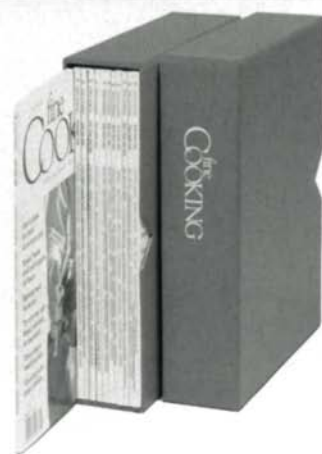
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Recipe	Page	Calories		Protein	Carb	Fats (g)				Chol.	Sodium	Fiber	Notes
		total	from fat	(g)	(g)	total	sat	mono	poly	(mg)	(mg)	(g)	
Letters	10												(analysis per serving)
Maple Apple Pancake		220	110	4	24	12	7	3.5	0.5	135	180	1	based on 4 servings (without sugar dusting)
In Season	16												
Pan-Fried Yukon Gold Potatoes with Paprika		190	100	3	20	11	1.5	8	1	0	150	1	based on 6 servings
Roasted Chicken & Potatoes	34												
Chicken Thighs Roasted with Rosemary, Red Onions & Red Potatoes		430	190	30	30	22	4.5	12	3.5	100	380	4	based on 4 servings
Burnished Chicken Thighs with Roasted Sweet Potatoes & Parsnips		430	220	31	21	25	5	13	4	105	650	4	based on 4 servings
Roasted Chicken Thighs, Potatoes & Tomatoes with Olives & Mint		430	200	31	25	23	4.5	13	4	100	500	3	based on 4 servings
Roasted Chicken Thighs, Potatoes & Lemons with Cilantro Gremolata		380	180	30	20	20	9	7	3	120	380	3	based on 4 servings
Winter Greens Gratin	39												
Creamy Winter Greens Gratin		330	280	7	8	31	19	9	1.5	105	410	2	based on 4 servings
Braised Short Ribs	42												
Asian-Glazed Braised Short Ribs		400	190	26	24	22	7	10	2.5	75	1010	1	based on 6 servings
Red Wine Marinated Braised Short Ribs		410	190	26	7	21	7	11	1	75	410	1	based on 6 servings
Short Rib Ragù		330	180	22	10	20	7	10	1.5	65	900	2	based on 6 servings
Muffins	48												
Muffins		480	170	7	72	19	12	5	1	95	320	1	based on blueberries, lemon zest, lemon glaze
Lemons as the Star	52												
Pork Scaloppine with Prosciutto, Sage & Caramelized Lemon		460	250	33	18	29	9	10	7	105	1090	4	based on 3 servings
Herb-Roasted Chicken with Lemons		700	380	68	4	42	13	17	8	230	500	0	based on 4 servings
Angel Hair Pasta with Lemon Cream Sauce		590	210	12	68	23	14	7	1.5	80	170	2	based on 4 servings
Lemony Chicken Noodle Soup with Ginger, Chile & Cilantro		190	35	18	23	4	1	1.5	1	40	820	1	based on 4 servings
Preserved Lemons		5	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	250	1	per ¼ lemon
Tomato, Feta & Preserved Lemon Salad		230	180	6	7	21	7	11	1.5	35	800	2	based on 6 servings
Rice Noodle Stir-Fries	58												
Stir-Fried Noodles with Shrimp, Chiles & Lime		470	110	27	64	13	1.5	6	5	165	2520	5	based on 2 servings
Stir-Fried Noodles with Chicken, Mushrooms & Green Beans		410	80	19	63	9	1.5	3.5	3.5	35	1910	4	based on 2 servings
Stir-Fried Noodles with Tofu, Scallions & Peanuts		630	250	23	77	28	3.5	14	9	105	1850	4	based on 2 servings
Tiramisu	62												
Tiramisu		420	210	10	46	23	11	8	2	275	120	1	based on 12 servings
Quick & Delicious	82c												
Roasted Salmon & Asparagus with Lemon Oil		380	200	40	4	23	3.5	12	6	105	580	2	based on 4 servings
Braised Italian Chicken with Green Beans, Tomatoes & Olives		500	250	44	17	27	6	14	5	150	1060	3	based on 4 servings
Sichuan Braised Cod		290	120	30	11	13	1.5	7	3.5	115	940	1	based on 4 servings
Beef & Black Bean Chili with Chipotle & Avocado		670	260	42	64	29	7	16	2.5	85	1070	18	based on 4 servings
Roast Beef with Balsamic-Glazed Vegetables		420	150	45	20	17	4.5	9	1	95	520	3	based on 6 servings
Wilted Arugula Salad with Sautéed Pork, Pears & Blue Cheese		710	470	32	27	53	13	32	4.5	90	800	3	based on 4 servings
Rigatoni with Spicy Tomato-Vodka Sauce		490	120	14	73	13	4.5	6	1.5	20	850	2	based on 4 servings

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at Nutritional Solutions in Melville, New York. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used in the

calculations. Optional ingredients and those listed without a specific quantity are not included. When a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion is used. When the

quantity of salt and pepper aren't specified, the analysis is based on ¼ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper per serving for entrées, and ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper per serving for side dishes.



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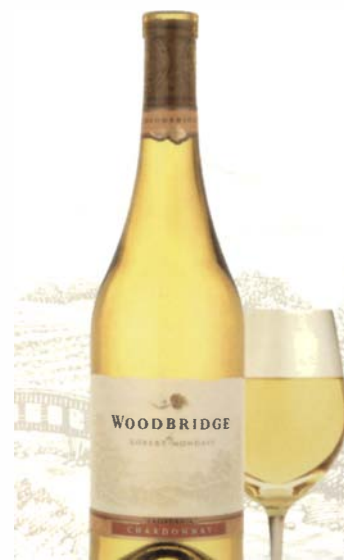
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Heavenly cheeses

You can't learn the art of cheesemaking from a book," says Mother Noella Marcellino, a microbiologist and master cheesemaker at the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, Connecticut. You need hands-on experience, and Mother Noella has plenty of it. Her training began in the late 1970s during a visit by an artisanal cheesemaker from France's Auvergne region, and continued throughout a three-year stay in France.

With Mother Noella's expert guidance, the "cheese nuns" of Regina Laudis have been making artisanal cheeses for more than 20 years (well before it became all the rage), inspired by a desire to save an ancient craft. Among their seven kinds of cheeses is a creamy St. Nectaire-type semihard cheese, which has a rich, nutty flavor and is so popular they can barely keep it on the shelves at the abbey's tiny shop. But making it is not easy, Mother Noella is quick to point out. It's a hands-on, labor-intensive process.

Cheesemaking is part of the abbey's commitment to agricultural sustainability, breed conservation, and self-sufficiency. While most products of the 400-acre land are for the abbey community only, the cheese is available to the public in very limited amounts.

—Laura Giannatempo, assistant editor

1. "Ripening is everything," says Mother Noella. It's when cheeses develop the natural microbes that account for each cheese's unique flavor.

2. Mother Lioba Postel hand-feeds the two newest additions to the abbey's family of Dutch Belt cows. The cows, which produce protein-rich milk perfect for cheesemaking, are milked by hand.

3. The curd is separated from the whey, and then blocks of curd are cut out, fit into round molds, and pressed by hand.

4. After salting and wrapping each cheese in cheesecloth, Mother Margaret Georgina Patton puts the cheese in a press.

BY TONY ROSENFELD

One-pot meals

are perfect for the end of a busy day, when I want a satisfying dinner but don't want to dirty a whole lot of pots and pans to get there. Many of the recipes you'll find here—braises, roasts, pasta, and even salad—have their sides built in (or better yet, don't need them at all), so you won't end up spending time on fussy accompaniments. Best of all, the dishes are easy to prepare on a weeknight and they've got intense, warming flavors that are well suited to the season, too.



Rigatoni with Spicy Tomato-Vodka Sauce

Serves four.

2 cloves garlic, minced
¾ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes; more to taste
2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
1 28-oz. can diced tomatoes
3 Tbs. vodka
½ cup freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano
¼ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
3 Tbs. heavy cream
½ tsp. kosher salt
½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
¾ lb. rigatoni (about 4 cups)

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil.

Meanwhile, in a large saucepan over medium-high heat, heat the garlic and red pepper flakes in the oil until they're fragrant and sizzle steadily for about 30 seconds. Add the tomatoes and their juices and the vodka, and bring to a boil. Then reduce the heat to a steady simmer, cover with the lid slightly ajar, and cook to intensify the flavors and reduce the sauce slightly (by about one-quarter), 10 to 15 minutes.

Purée the tomatoes using a hand blender or a regular blender. If you used a regular blender to purée, return the sauce to the saucepan. Stir in ¼ cup of the Parmigiano, the parsley, cream, salt and pepper, and more red pepper flakes if you like. Simmer to incorporate the cream and reduce the sauce slightly, about 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and keep warm.

Meanwhile, cook the pasta, stirring occasionally, until it's just tender to the tooth, 10 to 12 minutes. Drain well and return the pasta to its pot. Add the sauce, set the pot over medium heat, and cook, stirring, to let the pasta absorb some of the sauce, 1 minute. Serve immediately with a sprinkled with the remaining ¼ cup Parmigiano.

Note: If you're not a fan of spicy foods, you can use less crushed red pepper flakes.

quick prep, slow roast



Roast Beef with Balsamic-Glazed Vegetables

Serves six.

3 lb. beef rump roast or top round roast, trimmed of excess fat

3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil

2 Tbs. balsamic vinegar

Kosher salt

2 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary

Freshly ground black pepper

1 large red onion, thinly sliced

1 medium bulb fennel, quartered, cored, and thinly sliced lengthwise

1 lb. baby red potatoes, halved

onion, fennel, and potatoes with the remaining 2 Tbs. oil, 1 Tbs. vinegar, 1 tsp. rosemary, 1/2 tsp. pepper, and 1/4 tsp. salt. Spread the vegetables over the bottom of a 9x13-inch Pyrex dish. Nestle the roast, fat side up, in the middle of the vegetables.

Roast the beef until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center of the beef registers 125°F for medium rare, 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 hours. Transfer the beef to a cutting board to rest for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, raise the oven temperature to 450°F. Give the vegetables a stir and continue to roast them until they are browned and tender, about 10 minutes more. Thinly slice the beef, sprinkle with salt, and serve with the vegetables.

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F. Brush the beef with 1 Tbs. of the oil and 1 Tbs. of the vinegar. Season the beef all over with 2 tsp. salt, 1 tsp. of the rosemary, and 1/2 tsp. pepper. Toss the

Sichuan Braised Cod

Serves four.

1/2 cup plus 2 tsp. cornstarch

2 Tbs. rice vinegar, more to taste

3/4 cup low-salt canned chicken broth

1 1/2 Tbs. soy sauce

1 Tbs. ketchup

1 1/2 lb. thick cod fillets ("cod loins"), cut into 4 uniform pieces

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 eggs, beaten

3 Tbs. canola or peanut oil

10 dried Thai chiles or other small whole chiles

4 scallions, thinly sliced, white and green parts separated

1 1/2 Tbs. minced ginger

In a small bowl, mix the 2 tsp. cornstarch with the 2 Tbs. vinegar. Add the broth, soy sauce, and ketchup. Season the fish with 1/2 tsp. salt and 1/2 tsp. black pepper. Spread the remaining 1/2 cup of the cornstarch on a plate, and put the eggs in a wide bowl. Dredge the fish in the cornstarch. Heat 2 Tbs. of the oil in a 12-inch nonstick pan over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Soak the fish in the egg for a couple of seconds, then add to the pan. Cook, flipping after 3 minutes, until the fish is browned

and a little firm to the touch, about 5 minutes total (it should not be cooked all the way through). Transfer the fish to a large plate.

Add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil to the pan, then add the chiles, white parts of the scallions, and ginger. Cook, stirring, until the scallions become translucent and browned in places, about 2 minutes. Give the cornstarch mixture a quick stir and then pour it into the pan. It should come to a boil and thicken quickly. Reduce the heat to medium-low, return the fish to the pan, and flip it a couple of times to coat it in the sauce. Cover the pan, leaving the lid slightly ajar, and cook until the fish is just cooked through and starting to flake, 3 to 5 minutes. Taste the sauce for salt and vinegar and add more to taste. Serve immediately with the sauce spooned over the fish and sprinkled with scallion greens.

Serving suggestion:

Serve with steamed white rice.



Beef & Black Bean Chili with Chipotle & Avocado

Serves four.

3 15-oz. cans black beans, rinsed and drained
1 14½-oz. can diced tomatoes
1 medium chipotle plus 2 Tbs. adobo sauce (from a can of chipotles in adobo sauce)
2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
1 lb. 85% lean ground beef
Kosher salt
1 large red onion, finely diced
1½ Tbs. chili powder
2 tsp. ground cumin
1 lime, juiced
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
Freshly ground black pepper
1 ripe avocado, cut in a medium dice

Put one-third of the beans into the bowl of a food processor, along with the tomatoes and their juices, chipotle, and adobo sauce. Process until smooth and set aside.

Heat the oil in a 5- to 6-quart Dutch oven or similar heavy-duty pot over medium-high heat until it's shimmering hot, about 2 minutes. Add the beef, season with ½ tsp. salt, and cook, using a wooden spoon to break up the meat, until it loses its raw color, about 3 minutes. Transfer the

beef to a large plate using a slotted spoon. Add half of the onion and ¼ tsp. salt, and cook, stirring, until it begins to brown and soften, about 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium. Add the chili powder and cumin and cook for 20 seconds. Add the remaining black beans, the puréed bean mixture, and the beef to the pot and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring frequently. Add half of the lime juice, half of the cilantro, and salt and pepper to taste. If the chili is thicker than you like, it may be thinned with water.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, mix the remaining lime juice and onion with the avocado. Season generously with salt and pepper. Serve the chili topped with the avocado mixture and remaining cilantro.

Serving suggestion:

Coarsely crumble about 3 handfuls of tortilla chips in a zip-top bag, and use them as an additional chili topping.



Roasted Salmon & Asparagus with Lemon Oil

Serves four.

1 large lemon
3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for the pan
20 thin stalks asparagus (10 to 12 oz.), trimmed
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 6- to 8-oz. skin-on salmon fillets (preferably about 1 inch thick)

Set a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 450°F.

Finely grate the zest from the lemon, preferably with a rasp-style grater. In a small bowl, combine the zest with 2 Tbs. of the oil. Cut the lemon in half and set aside.

On one side of a heavy, rimmed baking sheet, toss the asparagus with the remaining 1 Tbs. of the oil, ¾ tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. black pepper. Spread out the asparagus in one layer.

Lightly coat the other side of the baking sheet with oil, and place the salmon fillets skin side down on the oiled area. Sprinkle with 1 tsp. salt and ½ tsp. pepper. Roast until the asparagus are tender and the salmon is cooked to your liking (cut into a fillet with a paring knife to check), 10 to 13 minutes for medium. Keep in mind that the fish will continue to cook a bit more after it comes out of the oven. If the asparagus needs more time to cook, transfer the salmon to a platter, tent it loosely with foil, and return the asparagus to the oven until tender.

Arrange the salmon and asparagus on a platter and drizzle the lemon oil all over both. Squeeze a little juice from a lemon half over the salmon and serve immediately.



Braised Italian Chicken with Green Beans, Tomatoes & Olives

Serves four.

- 2 lb. boneless, skinless chicken thighs, trimmed of excess fat and each cut into 3 uniform pieces**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- ½ cup all-purpose flour**
- 2 to 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- ¾ lb. green beans, trimmed and cut in half**
- 3 cloves garlic, smashed and peeled**
- ⅓ cup dry red wine**
- 1 14½-oz. can diced tomatoes**
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary**
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes**
- ⅓ cup pitted, quartered Kalamata olives**

Season the chicken with 1 tsp. salt and ½ tsp. black pepper. Spread the flour on a plate, and lightly dredge the chicken in the flour. Heat 2 Tbs. of the oil in a large Dutch oven or casserole over medium-high heat until the oil is shimmering hot. Cook the chicken in two to three

batches (to avoid crowding the pot) until well browned on both sides, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Transfer each batch to a plate as it finishes, and if the pot looks dry between batches, add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil.

Return the chicken to the pot, add the green beans, garlic, ½ tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. black pepper, and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Add the red wine and cook until it almost completely evaporates, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the tomatoes and their juices, rosemary, and red pepper flakes. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat to a steady simmer. Cover, leaving the lid slightly ajar, and cook, stirring occasionally for 15 minutes. Add the olives, and continue simmering with the lid ajar until the chicken and green beans are very tender, about 5 minutes more. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.



Wilted Arugula Salad with Sautéed Pork, Pears & Blue Cheese

Serves four.

- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar**
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard**
- ½ cup plus 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 medium shallot, finely diced**
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 6 ounces baby arugula, washed and spun dry (about 8 loosely packed cups)**
- 1 firm-ripe Bosc pear**
- ½ cup all-purpose flour**
- 1 pound pork tenderloin, trimmed and sliced ¾ to ½ inch thick**
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter**
- ¼ pound blue cheese, crumbled (about 1 cup)**
- ¼ cup dried cherries**

In a medium bowl, whisk together the vinegar and mustard. Slowly whisk in ½ cup of the oil. Stir in the shallot and thyme and season with salt and pepper to taste. Put the arugula in a large bowl. Core the pear and cut it into matchsticks.

Put the flour in a pie pan or large plate. Season the

pork liberally with salt and pepper and dredge in the flour. Set a heavy 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the remaining 3 tablespoons oil and the butter. When the butter melts and begins to lightly brown, cook the pork (in batches if necessary), flipping after 2 minutes, until it's just cooked through, about 3 minutes total. Transfer to a large plate. Repeat with the remaining pork.

Discard any fat in the skillet and set over low heat. Add the balsamic-Dijon vinaigrette and cook, stirring to pick up any browned bits on the bottom of the pan, until the sauce is warm, about 1 minute. Pour the vinaigrette back into its bowl and whisk to recombine. Toss the arugula with half of the warm vinaigrette. Arrange the arugula on 4 plates. Top with the pork, pear, blue cheese, and dried cherries, and drizzle with the remaining vinaigrette.

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A photograph of the Anolon Titanium 12 Piece Set in a kitchen setting. Two frying pans hang from a rack in the background. In the foreground, a large sauté pan sits on a gas stove with a blue flame, containing a colorful vegetable medley. To the left, two covered saucepans are stacked. In the background, a large covered stockpot sits on the stove. A vase with green herbs is on the left, and a small bowl of red peppers is on the right.

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2 Piece Meat Loaf Pan Set
\$20.00

Anolon
9" Square
Spring Form Pan
\$25.00

Anolon
11" x 17" Large
Cookie Pan \$20.00

Anolon
6 Cup Mini Loaf Pan
\$25.00

Select Anolon bakeware available at:
Sur La Table, Macy's, Linens-N-Things, Carson Pirie Scott, Herberger's, Boston Store, Younkers and Bergner's. Not all items available at all stores.



ANOLON
ADVANCED

Anolon Advanced 12" Round Grill Pan
Perfect for grilling.
Special Value: **\$29.99**

Anolon Advanced available at: Filene's, Kaufmann's, Strawbridge's, Hecht's, L.S. Ayres, The Jones Store, Bergner's, Famous-Barr, Robinsons-May, Meier & Frank, Crate & Barrel, Linens-N-Things, Sur La Table, Carson Pirie, Fortunoff Scott, Herberger's, Boston Store, Younkers, Macy's, Bloomingdale's, Foley's, Bed Bath & Beyond and Cooking.com.



Anolon Advanced
3.5 qt. Straining Saucepan
Great for straining.
Special Value: **\$39.99**

Not all items available at all stores.



**Anolon
Rectangular Contoured Roaster with Rack**

Suitable to make gravy on the stovetop.
Hard-anodized aluminum ensures even
heating, while the nonstick interior
makes it easy to clean.

Special Value: **\$79.99**



**Anolon
2 Piece Carving Set**
Special Value: **\$59.99**

Anolon Kyotsu Knife

Kyotsu – meaning “universal” in Japanese
– combines the wide, tall blade of a
Santoku and the controlled uniform
chopping of a chef’s knife.

7.5" Kyotsu with sheath **\$50.00**

5.5" Kyotsu with sheath

Special Price: **\$19.99**



* All Anolon cutlery
comes with a free
protective sheath

KitchenAid: where high-tech

KitchenAid® Gourmet Excellence 5 Ply Stainless Clad 9 Piece Set

The ultimate in clad cookware, stainless steel layers inside and out, plus 3 layers of aluminum for unsurpassed even heating.

Set includes: 2 and 3 qt. Covered Saucepans, 8 qt. Covered Stockpot, 10" Clad Skillet, and a 12"/5 qt. Sauté with helper handle.

\$400.00



Available at Fortunoff and Chef Central and select gourmet stores

KitchenAid® Gourmet Essentials™ Hard Base 10 Piece Set

Patented three coat "Hard Base" ceramic nonstick that's tough and durable, heavy gauge aluminum, porcelain enamel exterior and a soft, cool, silicone handle.

Also available in Navy.

Set includes: 1 qt. and 2 qt. Covered Saucepans, 8 qt. Covered Stockpot, 8" and 10" Open Skillets, 10"/3 qt. Covered Sauté with helper handle.

\$149.99



2 qt KitchenAid® Teakettle

Special Value **\$39.99**
(available in many colors)

Available at Kohl's, Sears, Linens-N-Things, Carson Pirie Scott, Herberger's, Boston Store, Younkers and Bergner's. Not all items available at all stores.

is also high style.

When you want cookware that looks as extraordinary as it performs, look to KitchenAid.



KitchenAid® Gourmet Distinctions™
11" Covered Sauté
Special Value: \$49.99



KitchenAid® Gourmet Distinctions™ 10 Piece Set
Professional grade stainless steel with a unique base of both copper and aluminum for controllable, fast even heating.
Set includes: 1.25, 2.5 and 3.5 qt. Covered Saucepans, 8 qt. Covered Stockpot, and 8" and 10" skillets.
\$249.99 Suggested Retail

Exclusively available at Macy's.

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To view the entire collection
visit kitchenaid.com

ADVANTAGE: A chef's advantage with by FARBERWARE

Advantage Stainless Steel 11 Piece Set

Set includes: 1.5 qt., 2.25 qt., and 3.25 qt. Covered Saucepans, 7 qt. Covered Stockpot, 10" Covered Sauté and a 8" Open Skillet.
\$199.99

A WORLD OF COOKWARE DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

ADVANTAGE® STAINLESS STEEL

"For the aspiring chef who desires heavier weight stainless steel cookware with features preferred by professionals."

Advantage Stainless
Steel 8" Skillet
Special Value: \$19.99

Available at Linens-N-Things, Fortunoff, Carson Pirie Scott, Herberger's, Boston Store, Younkers and Bergner's

cookware designed by a chef

ADVANTAGE® HARD ANODIZED

"For those who love to cook
with professional grade
cookware that's lighter
weight and nonstick."

Advantage
Hard Anodized
11" Round Griddle
Special Value: **\$19.99**

Advantage Hard Anodized 11 Piece Set

Set includes: 1.5 qt., 2 qt. and 3 qt.
Covered Saucepans, 7 qt. Covered Stockpot,
10" Covered Sauté, and a 10" Open Skillet.
\$149.99

It's called Circulon Premier. Just hold one and you'll know why.

Circulon Premier 10 Piece Set

Set includes: 1 qt. and 2 qt. Covered Saucepans, 8 qt. Covered Stockpot, 8" and 10" French Skillets, and a 10 1/3 qt. Covered Sauté with helper handle.

\$249.99

Featuring oven-safe,
comfortable silicone
and steel handles.

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The first line of hard-anodized, nonstick cookware. It's unique Hi-Low Food Release Circle System gives home cooks - the convenience of nonstick cookware with the performance and durability to outlast all other nonsticks... guaranteed!

CIRCULON®

Circulon Premier Twin Skillet Pack

Includes 9" and 10.5" Deep Skillets
for versatility and convenience.

Special Value: \$39.99

Circulon Premier exclusively available at Bed Bath & Beyond

To view the entire collection visit circulon.com.

Advertisement



**Circulon Elite
12" Covered Deep Skillet**

Designed with sloping sides so that omelettes, quesadillas & sautéed vegetables easily slide out.

Special Value: **\$49.99**

**Gourmet nonstick
cookware that's
proven to outlast
all other nonsticks
guaranteed:
Circulon Elite**

Circulon Elite 10 Piece Set

Set includes: 1 qt. and 2 qt. Covered Saucepans, 8 qt. Covered Stockpot, 8" and 10" French Skillets, and a 10"²/₃ qt. Covered Sauté with helper handle.

\$249.99

Circulon Elite available at: Macy's, Marshall Fields, Strawbridge's, Hecht's, Foley's, Robinsons-May, Meier & Frank, Carson Pirie Scott, Herberger's, Boston Store, Younkers, Bergner's, Linens-N-Things and Fortunoff. Not all items available at all stores.

Circulon Total: A set that does it all – from stovetop to oven.

Circulon Total 10 Piece Set

Set includes: 1 qt. and 2 qt. Covered Saucepans, 8 qt. Covered Stockpot, 8" and 10" French Skillets, and 10.5"/4 qt. Covered Sauté with helper handle.

\$199.99



NO MORE SPLATTERS!



Frying without the Splatter Shield can be messy on your stovetop and counter.

Circulon Splat Free Frying Set

The ingenious 3 Piece Splat-Free Frying Set has a unique open dome design to keep 99% of all splatters in the pan and off your stove, while allowing you to turn food without removing the shield.

Set includes: 12" Jumbo Fry Pan, Splatter Shield and Tongs.
Special Value: **\$49.99**

Cooking Solutions by Design

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Circulon Total available at: Linens-N-Things, JC Penney, Kohl's, and Sears. Not all items available at all stores.

CIRCULON

The essential set for gourmet and novice chefs alike: Circulon 2.

Featuring ergonomic oven safe phenolic handles and high dome stainless steel lids.

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Circulon 2 10 Piece Set
Set includes: 1 qt. and 2 qt. Covered Saucepans, 8 qt. Covered Stockpot, 8" and 10" French Skillets, and a 10.5"/4 qt. Sauté with helper handle.
\$199.99



Circulon 11" Square Griddle
Enjoy the thrill of the grill right on your stove.
Special Value: **\$29.99**



Circulon Total 14" Wok
Master Asian cooking with this easy to use Chinese wok with high dome lid.
Special Value: **\$59.99**



Circulon 5.5 qt. Straining Casserole With Locking Lid
Special Value: **\$59.99**

Circulon 2 available at: Macy's, Filene's, Kaufmann's, Strawbridge's, Hecht's, L.S. Ayres, The Jones Store, Famous-Barr, Foley's, Younkers, Bergner's, Meier & Frank, Bed Bath & Beyond, Carson Pirie Scott, Herberger's, Boston Store, Robinsons-May and Fortunoff. Not all items available at all stores.

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A WORLD OF
COOKWARE
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A better angle on cooking-

If you've seen professional chefs at work, you know how they can hold a pan and toss the food over and over without spilling or dropping anything. That's why you'll love the Circulon Toss & Turn pan. The uniquely sloped back wall is precisely designed to allow you to toss or turn food easily without a spatula. It's perfect for pancakes, omelettes, stir fry, and seared meats. It's one pan you'll flip over. Special Value: \$29.99

CIRCULON®



*"Tossing your food has just become
a lot easier, and a lot more fun.
Flip like a pro – no less, no mess."*

Martin Yan
Yan Can Cook

The Circulon Toss & Turn Pan
It's a Saucepan and Frypan in One!



Available at: Macy's, Filene's, Kaufmann's, Strawbridge's, Hecht's, L.S. Ayres, The Jones Store, Famous-Barr, Foley's, Robinsons-May, Meier & Frank, Bed Bath & Beyond, Carson Pirie Scott, Herberger's, Boston Store, Younkers, Bergner's, and Linens-N-Things.